FUTARI NO RÉNAI SHOKA

YAMAZAKI KORÉ

VOLUME 1

MANGA TIME KR COMICS

ふたりの恋愛書架

PRESENTED BY ヤマザキコレ YAMAZAKI KORÉ

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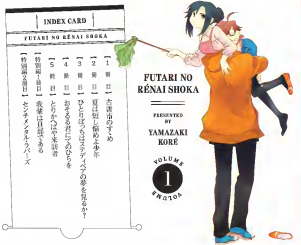

FUTARI NO RÉNAI SHOKA

PRESENTED BY YAMAZAKI KORÉ

VOLUME 1

KODANSHA MANGA TIME KR COMICS

1

«KOUDANSHA MANGA TIME KR COMICS»

芳文社

Heiki, it's me, Yamazaki, of the French Bread Party. Lately I've been busy so I haven't had the time to read many books. Anyway, this is my first volume of manga. I hope you enjoy it.

FUTARI NO RÉNAI SHOKA

YAMAZAKI KORÉ

COVER ILLUSTRATION YAMAZAKI KORÉ
COVER DESIGN SHO KABAWORK (TWINTAIL)

ふたりの恋愛書架

ヤマザキコレ
YAMAZAKI KORÉ

1

MANGA TIME
KR
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芳文社

FUTARI NO
RÉNAI SHOKA

YAMAZAKI
KORÉ

He was a student, wasn't he? What did he say his name was?
Akio, I think? I wonder if I'll see him again.

He felt sort of like [redacted] to me...

ふたりの恋愛書架

ヤマザキコレ

1

FUTARI NO
RENAI SHOKA

PRESENTED
BY
YAMAZAKI
KORE

Sitting on my father's lap, following along in my picture book,
listening to my mother's voice as she read aloud for me.
These are my oldest memories.

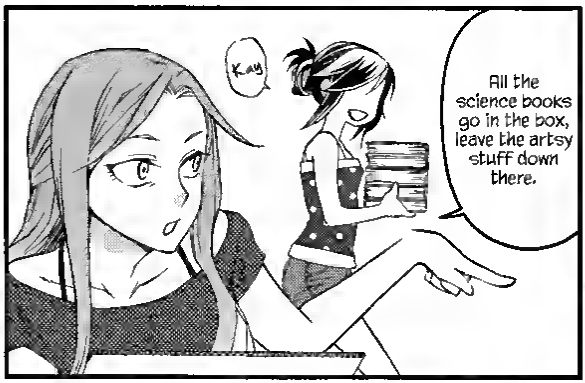
ふたりの恋愛書架

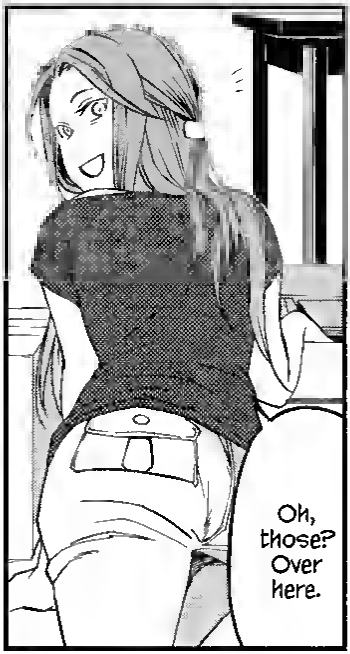
futari no renai shoka

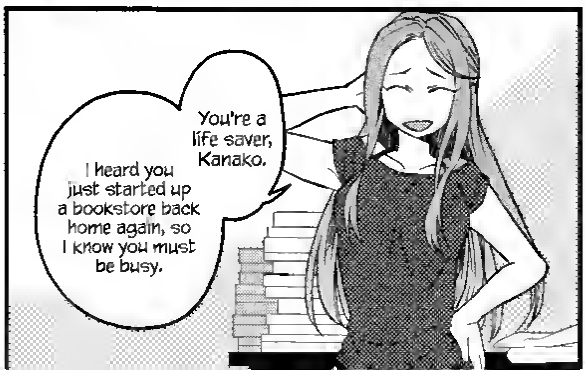
1
冊目

An Encouragement
at the Used Book Fair

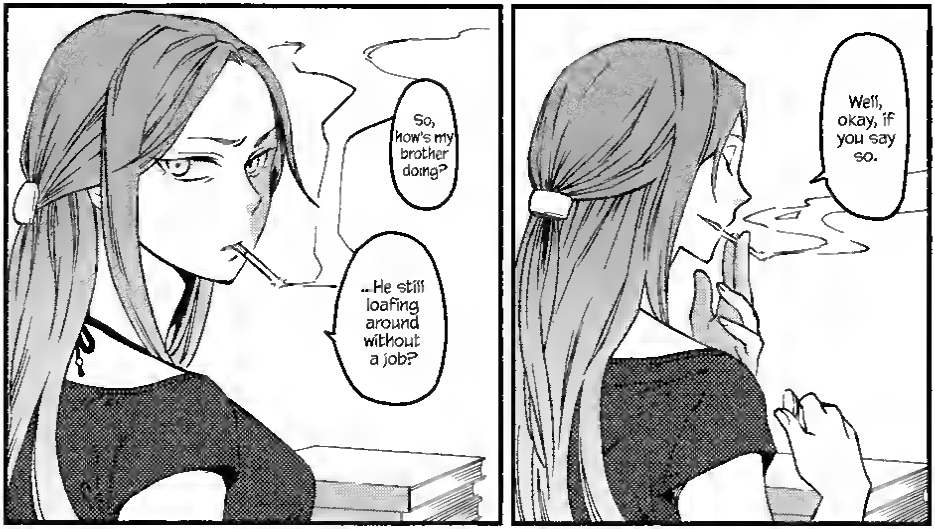
Auntie Hanao,
where do you want me to put these?


All the science books go in the box, leave the artsy stuff down there.
Kay


Oh, those? Over here.

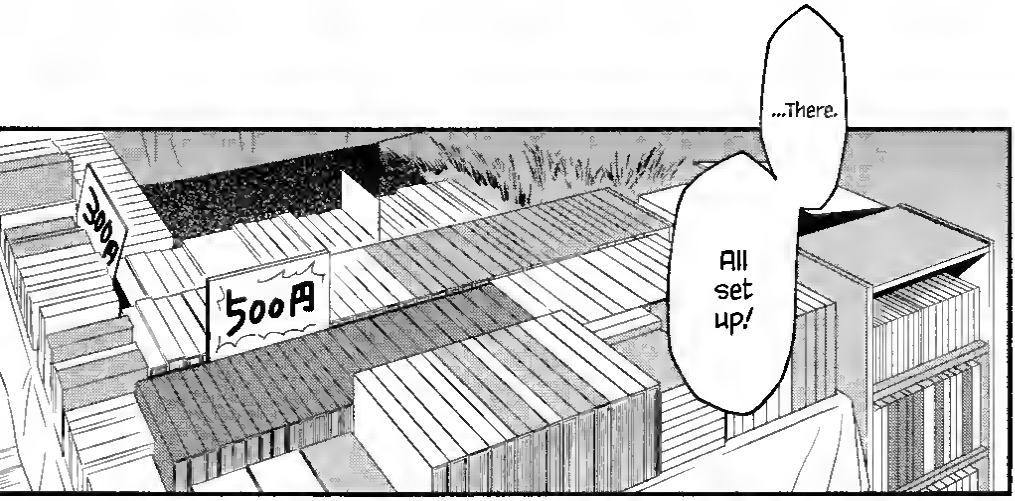

You're a life saver, Kanako.
I heard you just started up a bookstore back home again, so I know you must be busy.

古本まつり
Well yeah it's no Hokkaido
But now it's hot in Honsha
I'd heard so much about the book fairs in Kyoto. I always wanted to visit one!
Oh, it's my pleasure!


So, how's my brother doing?
..He still loafing around without a job?
Well, okay, if you say so.

Father's... well, he's managing. He'll do alright.
Probably.

Yeah, I dunno about that!


...There.
All set up!
300円
500円

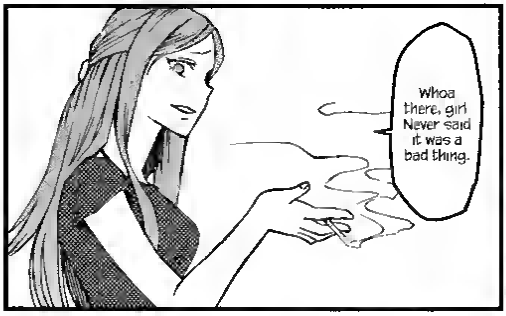
You know, Kanako, you're not a book but I can still read you just fine.
ACK.

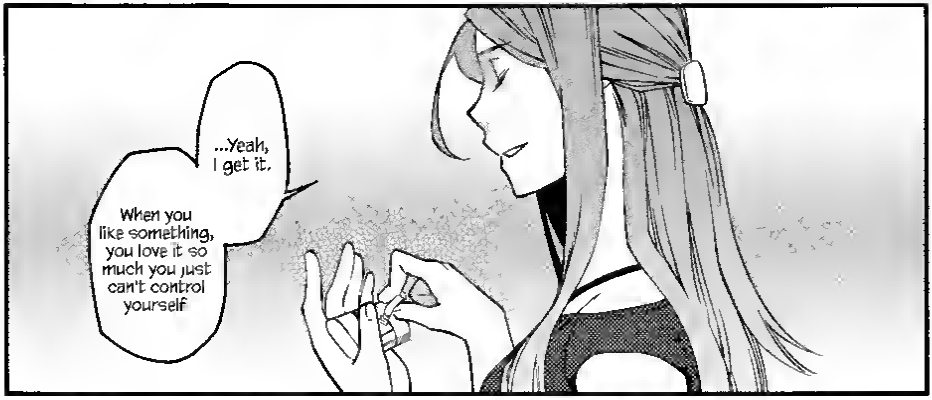
Mmm. We're probably not gonna get many people, but

You want me looking after the books, right?
Now we just need some customers and we'll be set

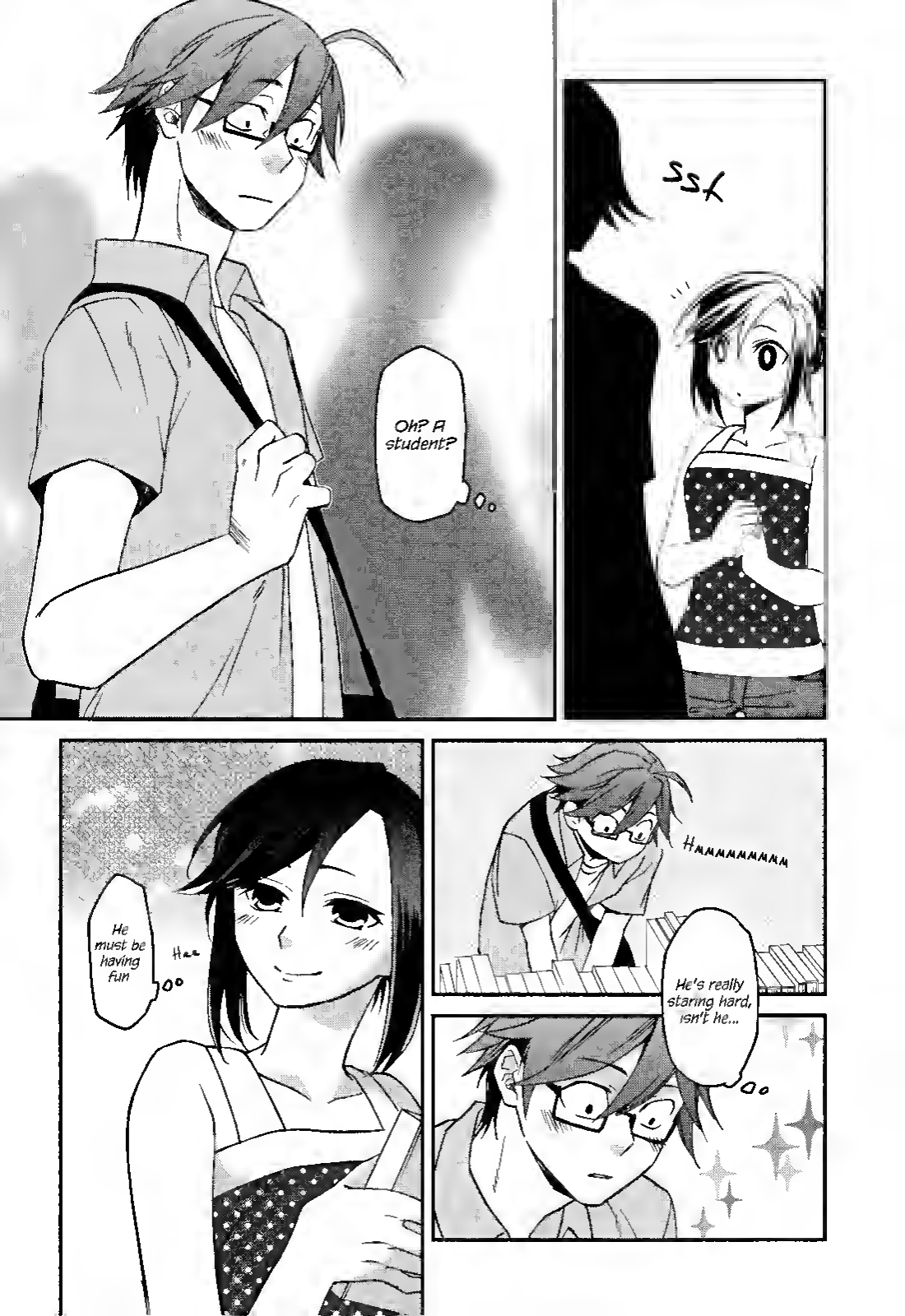
I can't help liking what I like!

Oooh...
You're way more suited to reading books at places like this, not sitting around trying to sell 'em.


Whoa there, girl. Never said it was a bad thing.

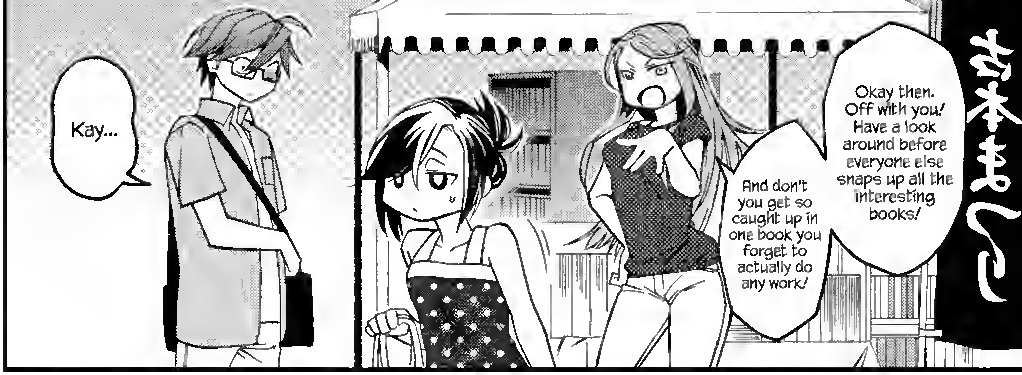

...Yeah, I get it.
When you like something, you love it so much you just can't control yourself

...?


Oh? A student?
SSK
Hmmmmmmmm
He's really staring hard, isn't he...
He must be having fun
Hee

Excuse me.
Can I have this one?
Of course!
Let's see... Oh!
Wow, you pick some really interesting books to read.
I really like this author. They're not very famous, but there's this depth to the sentences..
I know it doesn't make sense, but it's like I can see the colors.

LIKE IN THAT ONE SHORT STORY COLLECTION TITLED "THE SANDS OF SUNSET" THERE'S THIS ONE STORY CALLED "THE CRY OF SUMMER" THAT REALLY MADE IT FEEL LIKE SUMMER WAS THERE ALREADY!
Oh, I know that one! I love it too!
It's not often this author has a man as the main character too and that's also so
babble babble babble babble babble
OH, I TOTALLY KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN! I LOVE THIS AUTHOR'S WORKS TOO!
Well, you two're certainly getting along.
...Oh.
Here's your change and a flier for our store.
If you have something you need we can even order it for you, so call sometime
Tha... Thank you.
OW ON ON ON ON ON


Kay...
Okay then. Off with you! Have a look around before everyone else snaps up all the interesting books!
And don't you get so caught up in one book you forget to actually do any work!

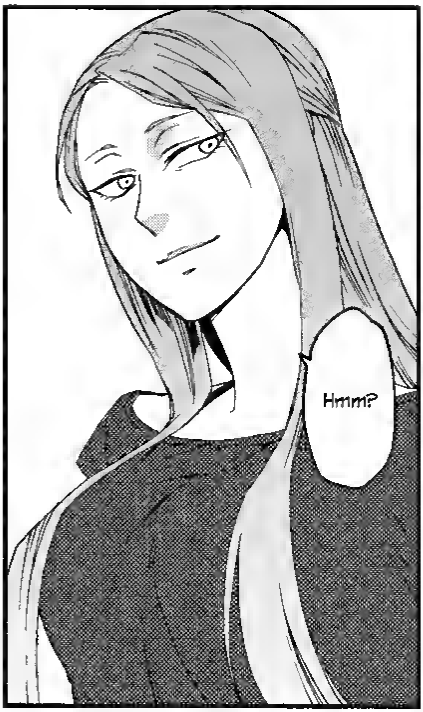
Umm... What's your name?
Me?
?

Akio, huh Here, I know it's technically none of my business but –
Err... It's Akio.
Itou Akio.

Paff
A straw hat?
Well?
It keeps the sun out of your eyes *and* lets the breeze reach you. Great, huh?
What're you doing with a straw hat, Kanako? You know this is the 21st century, right?
WHAT?! I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW THEY'RE STILL VERY MUCH IN USE DOWN IN THE COUNTRY-SIDE! I MEAN IT'S MOSTLY THE OLD FARMERS WHO WEAR THEM BUT STILL!
Anyway, Akio. Seems like you don't have a hat of your own,
and the heat is really getting to people lately, so I'll let you borrow that.
But . umm Kanako, was it? What about you?
I'll be okay, I'll just borrow hers.
HEY.

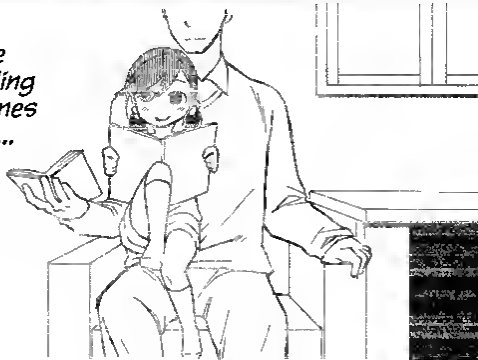
Imagine how disappointing it would be to collapse of sunstroke on a great day like this.
Right?
Oh wow he looks like a total dork with a hat on
You were getting really friendly with him, weren't you,
Kanako?
Friendly?

I've never seen you chatting with a guy you don't know like that.
Really?
You might be right.
Right?
I guess...

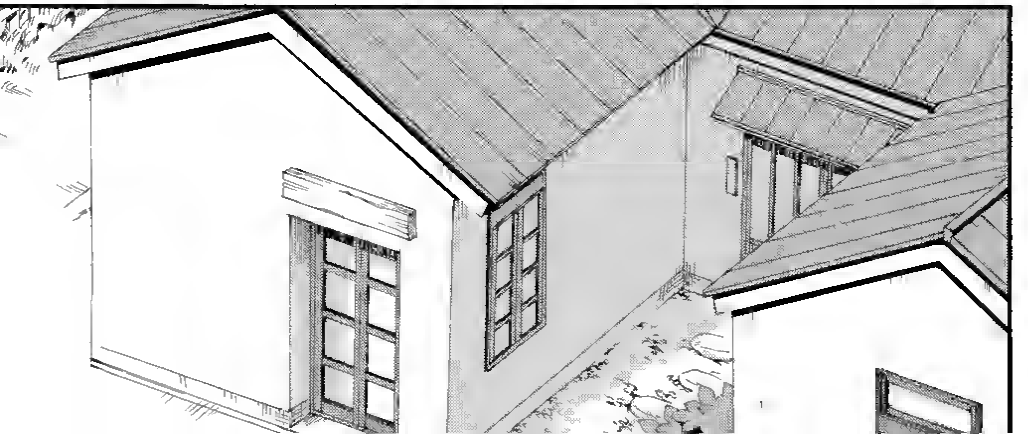


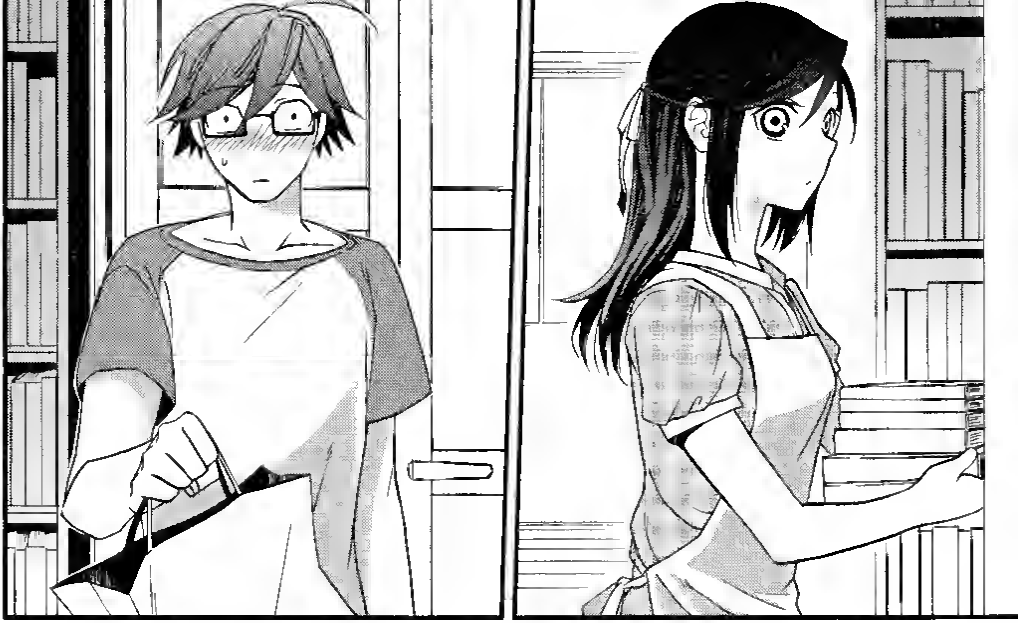
So what was it that got your heart pounding? Just that he liked books like you? Or was it the boyish good looks?
It wasn't like...
Gosh, you're being such a gossipy old lady right now, Auntie!

The same sort of feeling as those times long past...



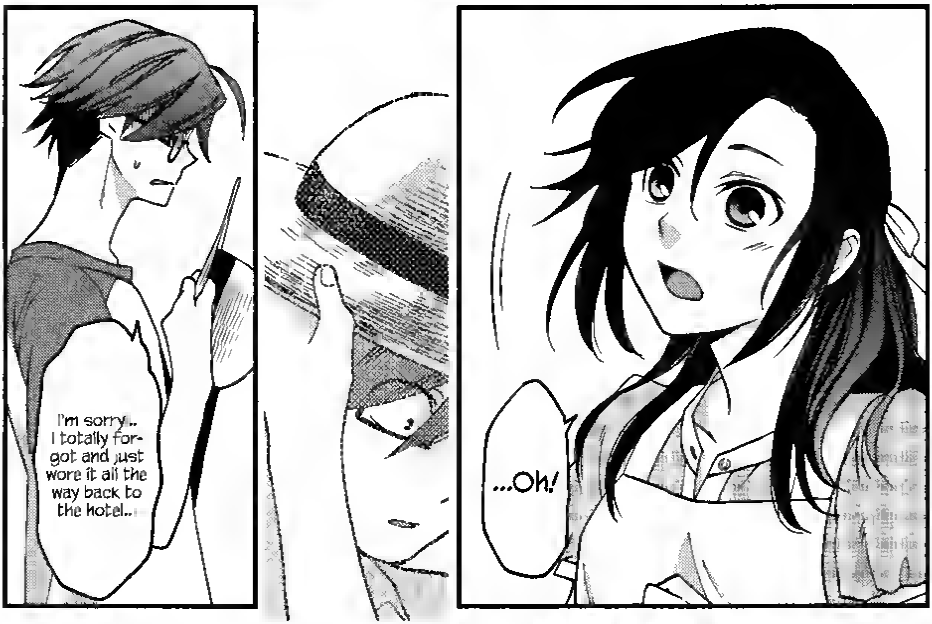
Funny, you'd think I'd have put that out of my mind by now.
I mean, those days are gone now,
and they're never coming back.

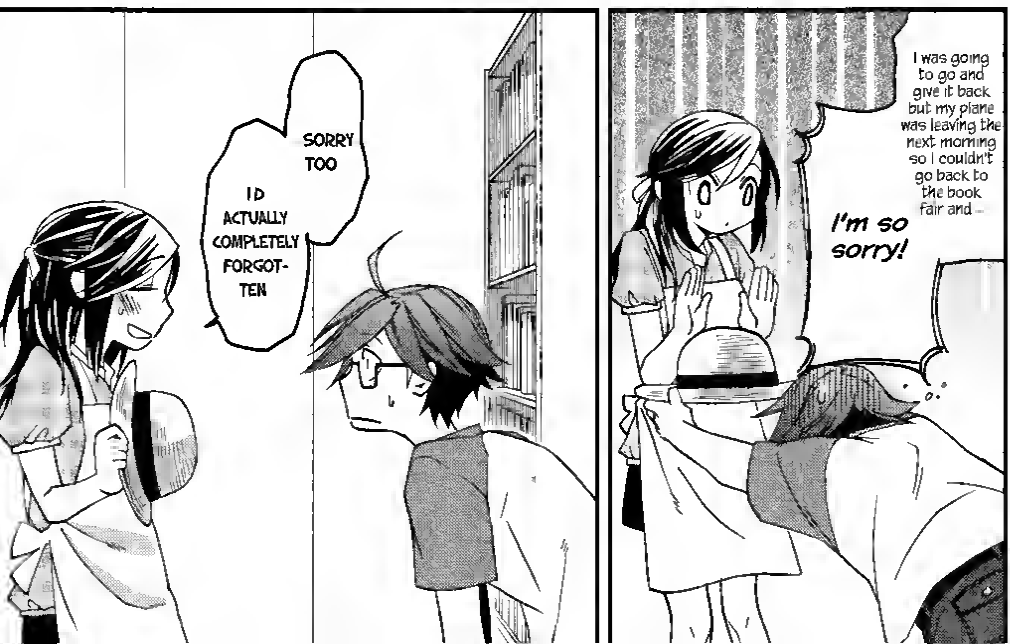




Hello...
...AKIO?! WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?!

But, umm... Why're you here?
Wow!
so I called and they told me that this was the place you worked...
There was a phone number on the flier I got back then,


I'm sorry... I totally forgot and just wore it all the way back to the hotel...
...Oh!

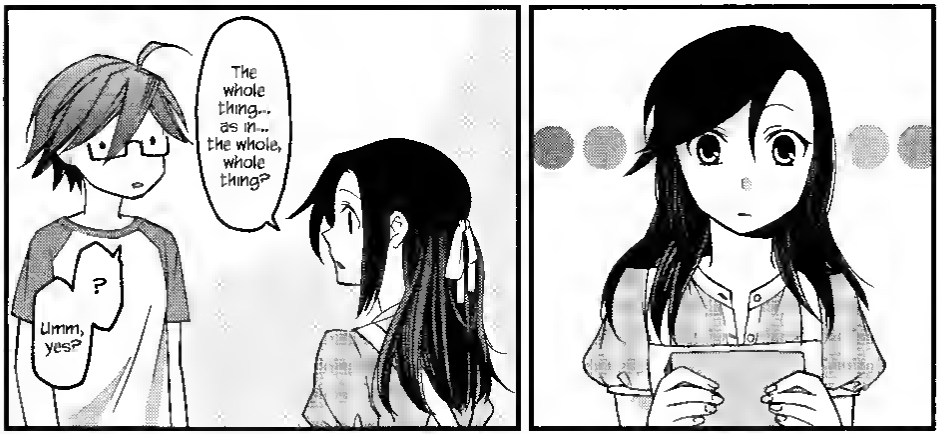

I was going to go and give it back but my plane was leaving the next morning so I couldn't go back to the book fair and—
I'm so sorry!
SORRY TOO
I'D ACTUALLY COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN

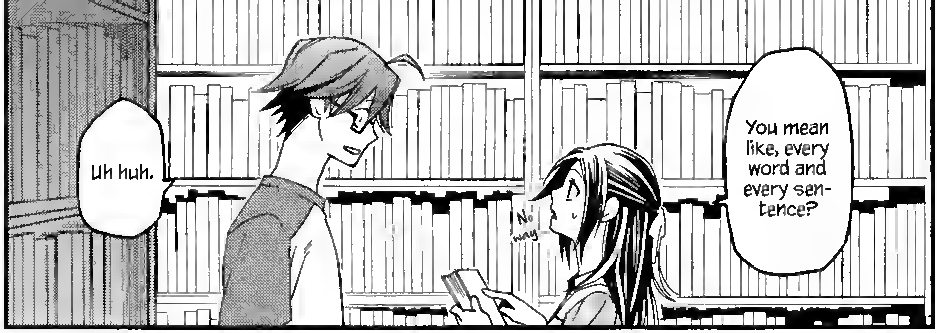
Umm.
Actually, about that
...I live really close by.
Huh?
I dunno whether that's a good thing or not...
Thanks for taking the time to bring it back! Don't you live super far away?
I was just as surprised when I heard it over the phone.
The road just outside the door is actually the way I go to school

What?
I-I had suh, something I wanted to give you!!!
Umm.
Oh.
Oh, umm, okay?! What is it?!
This is so awk-ward
skff skff
Uh huh.
Wow, what a coinci-dence!
Here.
Mhmm. It's their first collection of short stories.
Isn't this that author...
!

It's fine.
This would probably be really expensive if you found the right person!
B-But is it okay with you?!
They only ever printed one run and it wasn't all that well known, so I thought you might not have read it.

I already memorized the whole thing, and I thought the book would enjoy being read by someone new, too.
My grandfather gave it to me, but he's gone now.


The whole thing... as in... the whole, whole thing?
?
Umm, yes?


Uh huh.
No way
You mean like, every word and every sentence?

You see,
I can remember everything about every book I've ever read, right down to the page number.

Okay, then.
Ahem

Well, it just doesn't seem that... err... human.
..You don't believe me, do you.

Open it to a random page and tell me the page number and line
Page 96.
All of it.
Okay...
Hmm

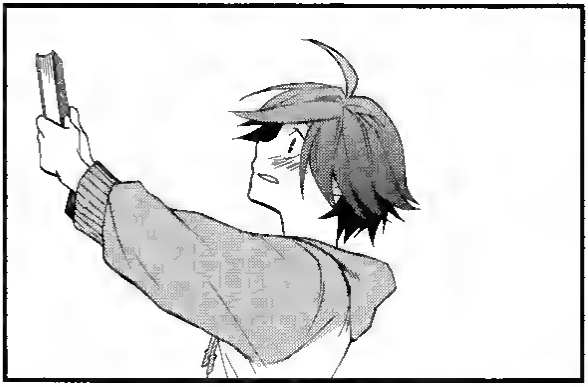
"The geese cross the scarlet expanse of heaven.
"Not a telephone line bars their way as they fly in formation,
"a single acute edge flying far, so far across the sunset sky
"The plants of the plains prick my hands and feet as I lay back,
"but the chill is sweet to me."

"Where are those geese going?
"Are they headed to their faraway nests, their brief havens of respite?
"Or are they searching for a place we can't even imagine, tirelessly sifting through an endless number of skies?"
Ah...
Yes, this is it.

He gives me what I need.
Aaah! Wh-What's wrong?!
Did you hate my voice that much?!
I'm so sor-
Akio.
...Kanako?

...Will you marry me?

Here, Akio.
This is yours now.



I hope that by the time you're able to read this, my fool of a daughter will have gotten some sense in her head

Years passed, and I read the book from cover to cover.

But it didn't bring my mother back, or my father.
By then, though, books already had me in their thrall.

ふたりの恋愛書架

futari no renai shoka

The Summer is Short, Start Worrying, Boy

2冊目

What's gotten into you these past few days, Akio?
...Professor,

Hmm
what would you do if a near total stranger asked you to marry them?
I'd probably think it had something to do with their religion, or maybe that they were after my money
What's the matter? Did that happen in some book you were reading and it's bothering you?
Right?
I don't think you'd find a book with a plot like that in a school library
I don't know about that. Those light novels can get pretty weird these days

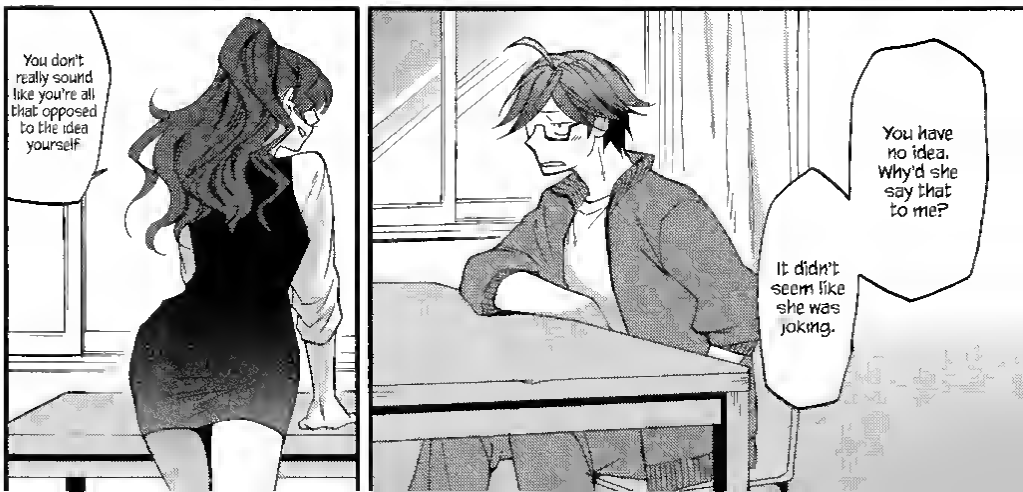
Don't tell me it's something that actually happened to you?

...
Wait, really? This isn't some sort of joke?

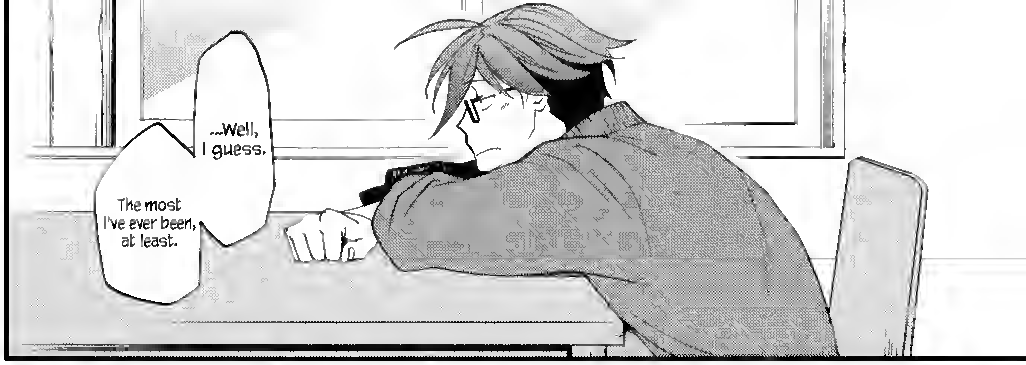
...Will you...
...marry me?
..What?
Err..
Umm.
I mean
....Eep?!
...Oh.
Y-YOU CAN FORGET WHAT I JUST SAID! ACTUALLY I'M BEGGING YOU PLEASE FORGET ALL ABOUT IT!
Huh?
What?
SEE YOU AGAIN SOMETIME THANKS BYE!
SORRY I NEED TO SORT OUT THIS SHIPMENT OF BOOKS THAT JUST CAME IN!
Poof

L——n…
ぽかん…
Wait, "see you again"? Does she really mean that?
BAM
kanchi

Well, I'm stumped.


You don't really sound like you're all that opposed to the idea yourself
You have no idea. Why'd she say that to me?
It didn't seem like she was joking.

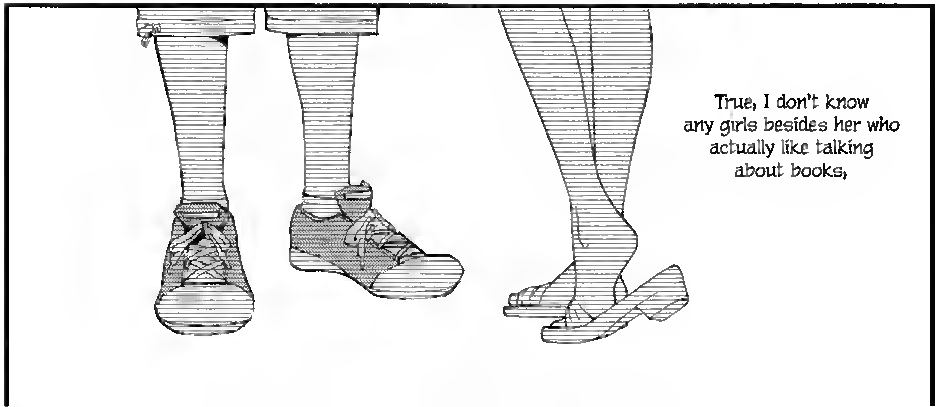
...Man, I really liked that bookstore too.
Hey, how about you take it slow for now and just pass notes back and forth?
This is the 21st century, Profes-sor!
You know, Akio,
do my eyes deceive me, or are you actually interested in another human being?


...Well, I guess.
The most I've ever been, at least.

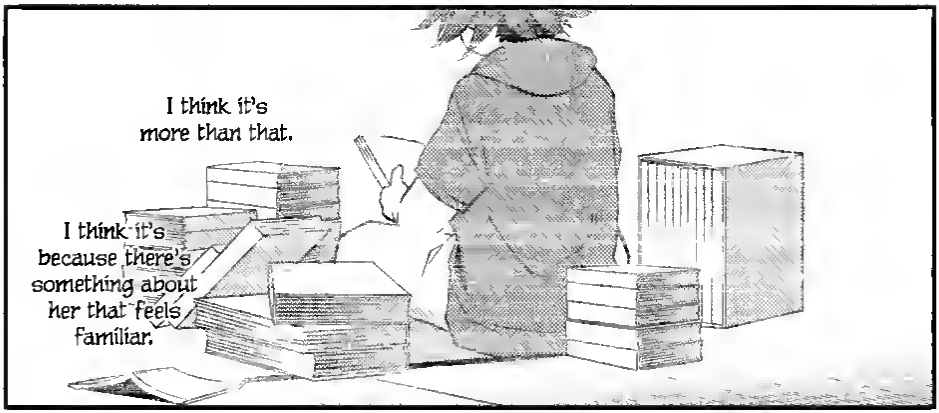
...Ever since that day at the book fair,

Hah. Well.
Be wary of her feminine wiles and you'll be alright, kiddo

thoughts of her face—
Kanako's face—
just won't leave
my head.


True, I don't know any girls besides her who actually like talking about books,

but...

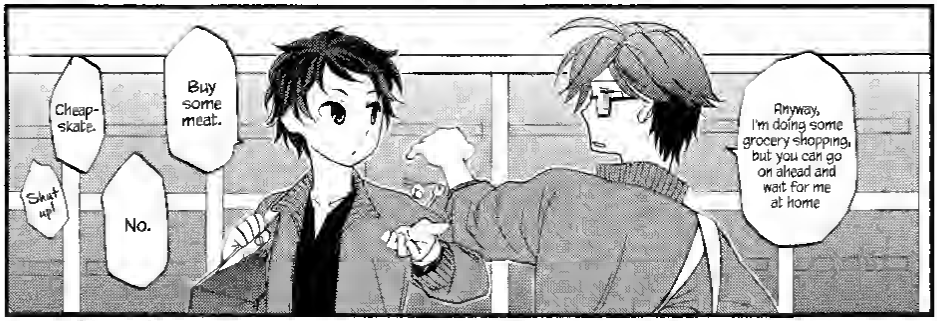

I think it's more than that.
I think it's because there's something about her that feels familiar.

Hey, Yuu.
Going home?
Hey, Akio.
I know it sounds silly considering she's almost a total stranger,
but it's the truth.

Err...
Sure, why not. I don't have any meat in the fridge, just so you know.
I'm still working on that fish

Can I go over to your place today? My big sister's over and I don't really wanna be around her.

But Moooom, I want meaaaat.
I think I'd have remembered it if I ever gave birth to a delinquent like you


Cheap-skate.
Buy some meat.
Shut up!
No.
Anyway, I'm doing some grocery shopping, but you can go on ahead and wait for me at home

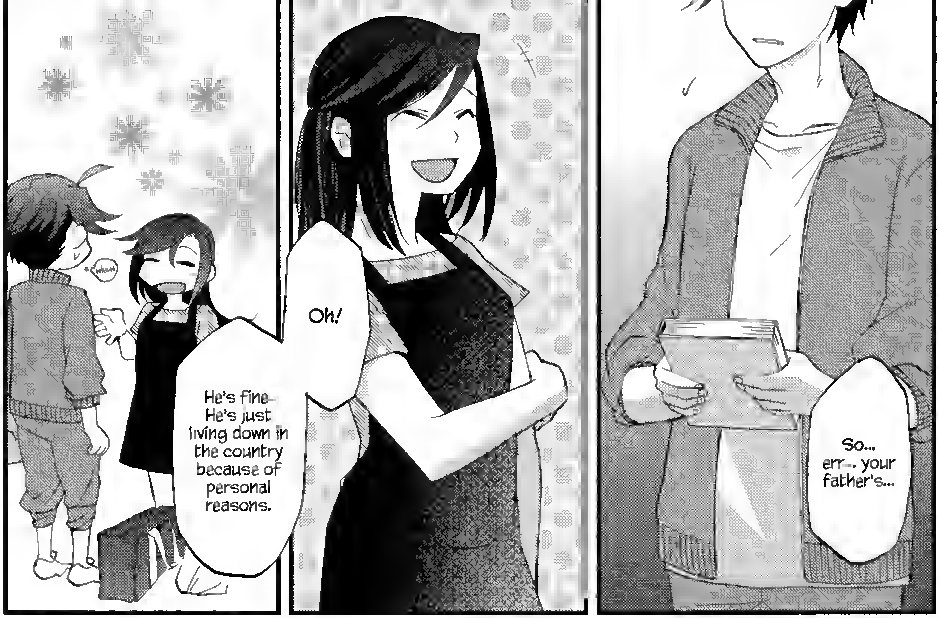
Hmm, really though, what should I make for dinner?

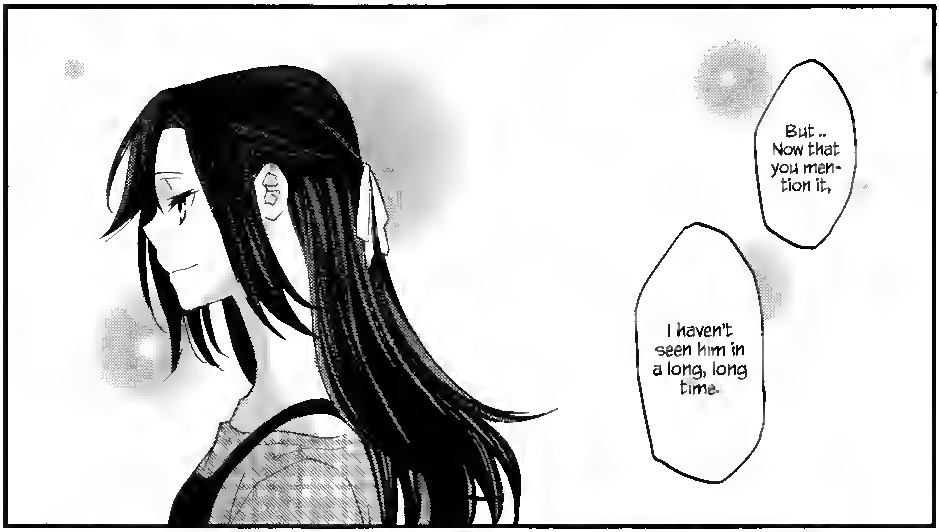
Let's see, burdock fried rice, miso with green onions, grilled tofu with natto...
And I guess some meat?
He's picky
Still, it's better to have someone to eat with.
...
Should I go in or just go home?

For some reason, I don't want to do that.
What should I do? What should I look like? What should I talk about?
Do I pretend I forgot?
No...
No use standing here worrying.
!!??
She just popped out?!
GAH
Hello.
Um... H-Hi.
A-Akio?
Oh...

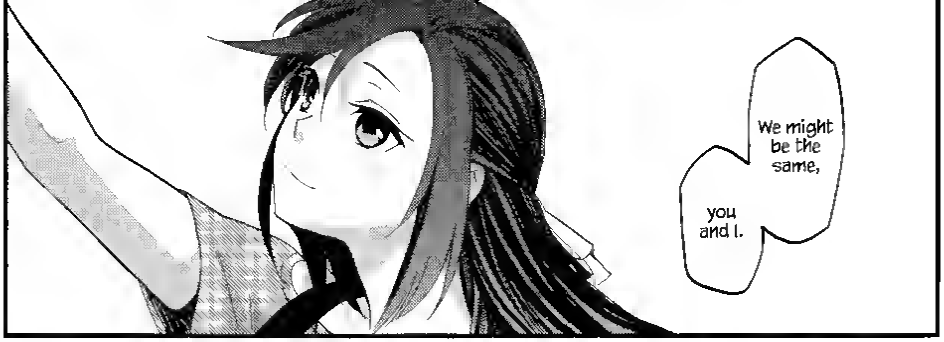
.....
O-Okay
C-Come on in...
...
This place feels really mysterious somehow.

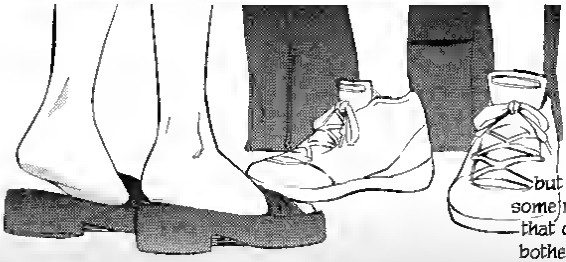
Back up? This isn't a new store?
I just opened back up a little while ago.
Mysterious or not, it's been killing me to clean it after all this time it was closed up.
No, this place was originally my father's
To be honest it's more like his extended bookshelf than a proper bookstore.
Wow...


So... err... your father's...
Oh!
He's fine. He's just living down in the country because of personal reasons.

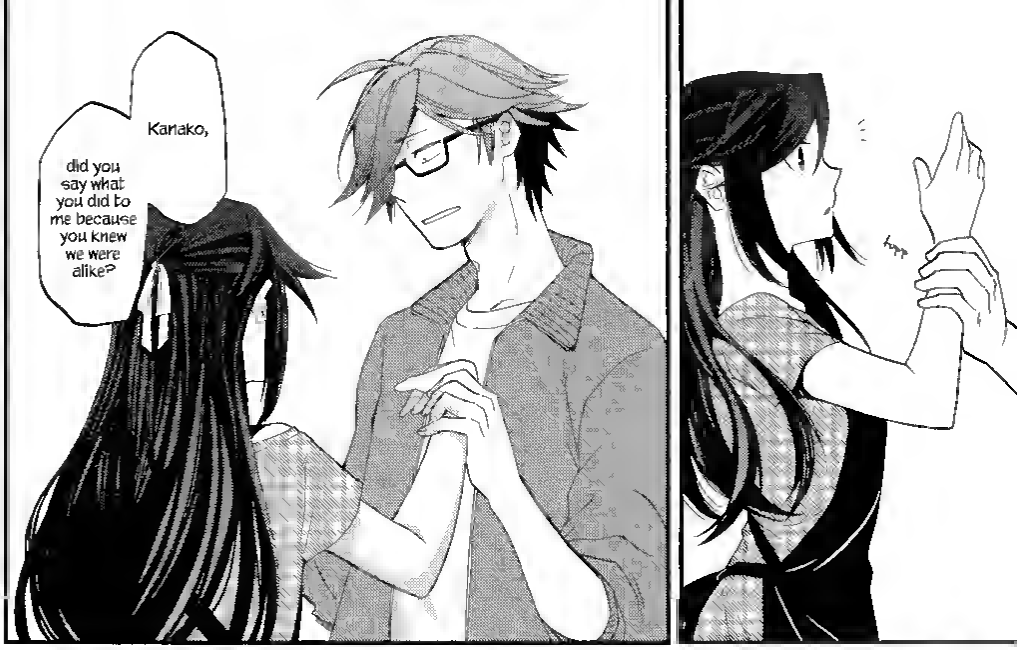

But.. Now that you mention it,
I haven't seen him in a long, long time.

Me, too.
It's been years since I saw my parents.
So that's what it was...
I don't know if it's because they're busy with work, but they almost never come home.
I'm this close to forgetting what they even look like.
paff

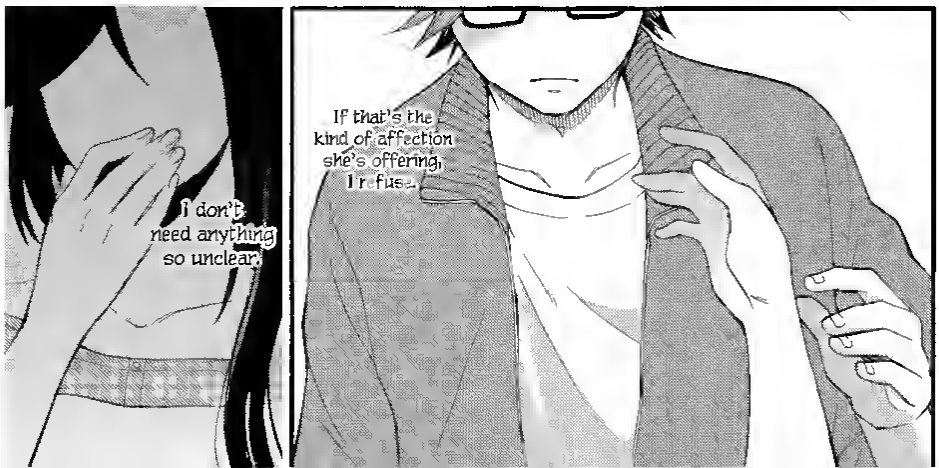




The words made it sound like she pitied me,


Kanako,
did you say what you did to me because you knew we were alike?
hmm

Was it just so we could lean on each other, and lick each other's wounds?


I don't need anything so unclear.
If that's the kind of affection she's offering, I refuse.

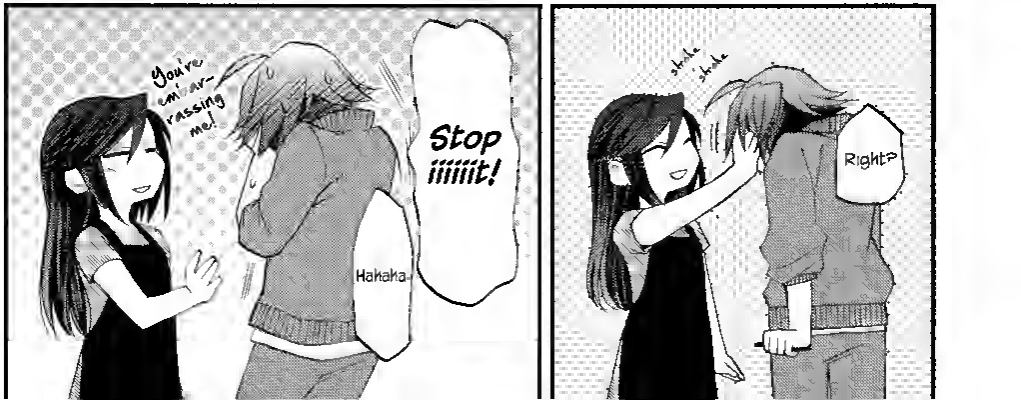
She laughed at me.
Ahahaha
Don't overthink it like that!
It's nowhere near that complicated!
PFFT.
She laughed at me?!
Besides... We're alike, but also different.
A memory...?
Mhmm
To me, you feel like a memory, Akio.

For some reason—I thought that you'd be able to give me those times back.
Like something I thought I'd lost a long time ago
That's why I want you.
So that's it.
All I need from you is you, Akio
There's—
There's nothing I can give—

But I'll be yours, too.
And it might not be much...
That's the reason I can't hate her.
Why her face won't leave my thoughts.
It's because she wants me to be with her, from the bottom of her heart.

huff
sniff
It's nothing.
Akio?

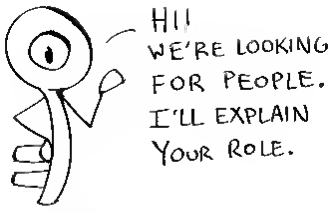
You were so lonely, weren't you?


You're embarrassing me!
Stop iiiiiit!
Hahaha
shake shake
Right?

What?
Sorry.
I know I'm only thinking of myself.
What?
but when I'm old enough,
I'll bring you a marria-e registra-ion form from city hall
—I'm too young now,

That's way too important to do by yourself! I'll go with you!

Imagine all the stares you'd get, a high schooler come by himself to get a marriage form!
Erm...
Actually- I'm only just finishing up junior high-
...HUH?
You're, umm, tall for your age.



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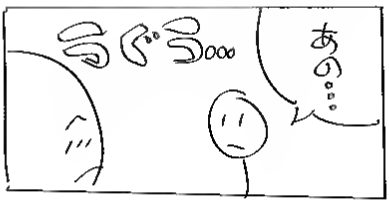
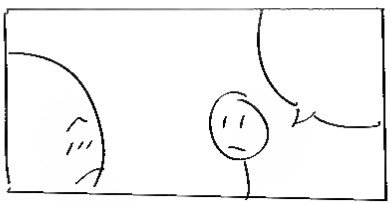
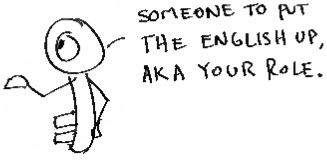
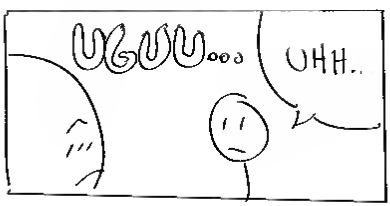
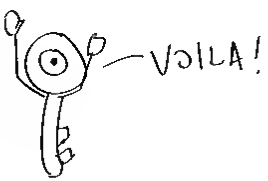










VISIT BIT.LY/MAIGOCHAT
FOR YOUR ≡GOLDEN≡
TICKET

Do Loners Dream of Teddy Bears?

ふたりの恋愛書架

futari no renai shoka

TNK
TNK
Umm, hi.
Oh! I was just thinking I hadn't seen you for awhile, Akio!
So that's your new uniform?
Uh huh.

It's not like you're really that old.
I mean, you're still only-

OWW
BWOOB

Finally a high schooler, huh... Ahh, to be young again!

Well I thought you'd've noticed the school jacket I was wearing
I mean, inner high? Really? They'd arrest me if they knew
You've got me there...
you come off as a lot older than you are, you know that?
Though speaking of age,
It's rude to casually mention a woman's age, you know.

...What?
I live in the back of the store. Since you're here and all already, why don't you just come on in?
Oh, right!
Is that.
Umm.
Uhhh?!
So why don't we catch up over a cup of tea?
I was just thinking, I didn't get to see you much all winter since you were studying for your high school entrance exams.
C'mon, move it!
bafp
?
Of course not.
I mean... is it... okay? Won't I be a bother?

Now, I'll just turn the sign around...
Move, move!
Off with the shoes, step inside!
There!
takk
CLOSED
...
Do you mind waiting in the living room while I get the tea ready?
hup hup hup hup hup

GAH
I just let her shove me inside in the confusion!
Wh-What do I do?!
I feel like I'm in some kind of reality show...
Ugh, what's going on
I've never been in a woman's home like this before... What do I do?!
Can I really step inside? Is it really okay?
No, standing here thinking won't solve anything. Okay, I'll head in and take it slow from there.
Yeah, that's right.
Homemade cooking
Clean and organized furniture.
Well, no, maybe I'm expecting a bit much
fwff

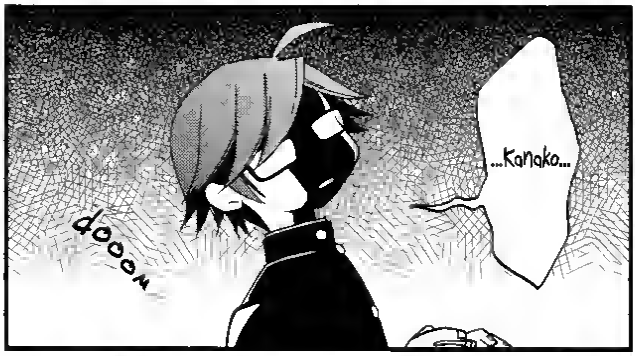
...It smells like wood and old paper...
I guess it's been a while since the building was built.
It feels so quaint...
Kanako said that this used to be her father's store,
so she probably lived here too when she was a girl.

BOXES
ka-tink
squeak squeak
muff
I wasn't seeing things...
It's a mountain of boxes... I'd understand if she'd just moved in, but didn't she say she'd been living here for almost a year?
No, wait, it's possible these are just books, and there's no room for them on the shelves...
What's the matter, Akio?
Oh, umm. Sorry, be right there.
I guess she doesn't see anything out of the ordinary about this at all...

I just hope they're books...
PHWAM
What're these just doing out here in the open?!
Please... mercy...
Seriously, she's way too trusting...
Akio?
Coming!

I've got a bad feeling about this for some reason...
Excuse me
...
crrk
kssss
kssss
fff
fff
Thought it'd be a mess like the hallway
Huh.
It's not as bad as I was expecting.

chak
But wait... It's a little too clean...
Almost sterile, like nobody's actually living here...
I know it's none of my business but I need to have a look
Umm, sorry about this.
.....
krrrrrk
Akio?


...Kanako...
dooom

...Err?

Oh?
What're you doing just standing there?

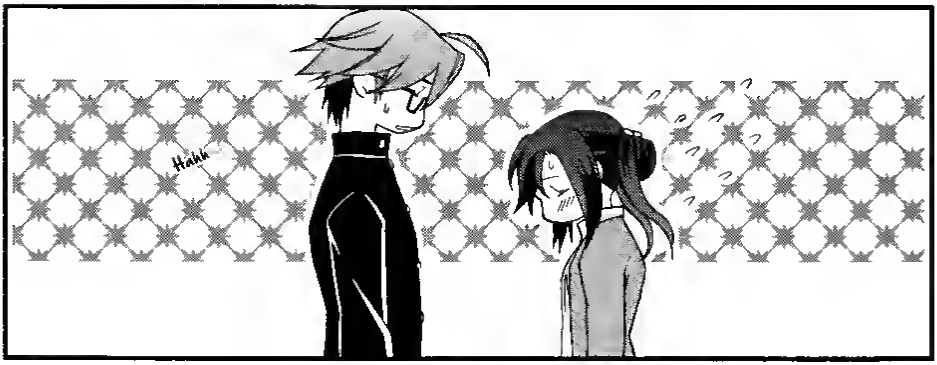
What do you normally eat?
There's not a single cooking utensil in here. The fridge is almost empty. What do you live on?
Umm
Uhh
Euuh
bum bum buuum

?!?!

I, uhh, usually get stuff from supermarket hot bars, or ready made bentos from convenience stores...you know...?
Oh... right... umm...
The croquettes are really yummy, actually

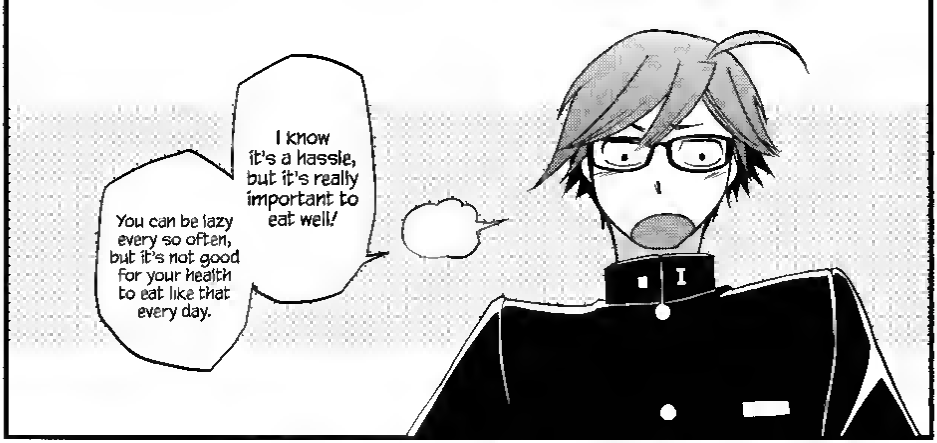
Do. You. Cook.
I-I.. No, I don't...
I'm sorry, I'm a failure as a woman

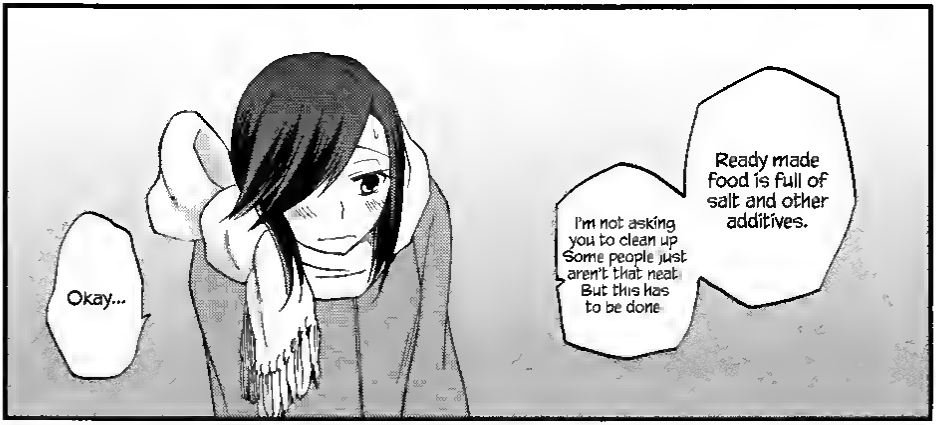
Do you ever cook at home?
Umm...


Hahh

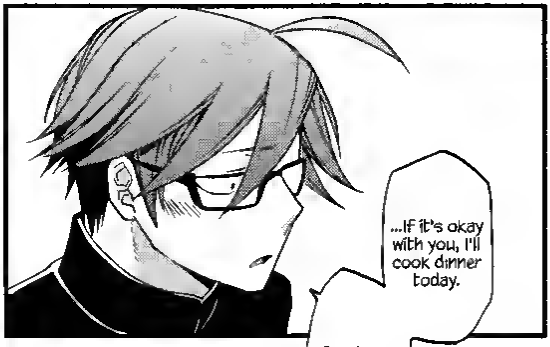
Up!
...Up?
Jump
Jump
Bwaah!
Akio, what's going on?!
It's a hoodie.
What's happening I can't see anything aaah
Here, put your arms through the holes.
Ooh...
Phwah!

Huh?
It's still snowing outside, so you've got to keep warm.
Huh? It's snowing again?
Umm?
It's big
We're going shopping.
Feels like it's been winter forever...
Wait, outside?
This place doesn't have any ingredients. No spices, no dried foods, nothing.
Not even any instant ramen! How is that possible?!
Wow, he already did a thorough search...
He's like a housewife...


I know it's a hassle, but it's really important to eat well!
You can be lazy every so often, but it's not good for your health to eat like that every day.


Ready made food is full of salt and other additives.
I'm not asking you to clean up. Some people just aren't that neat. But this has to be done.
Okay...

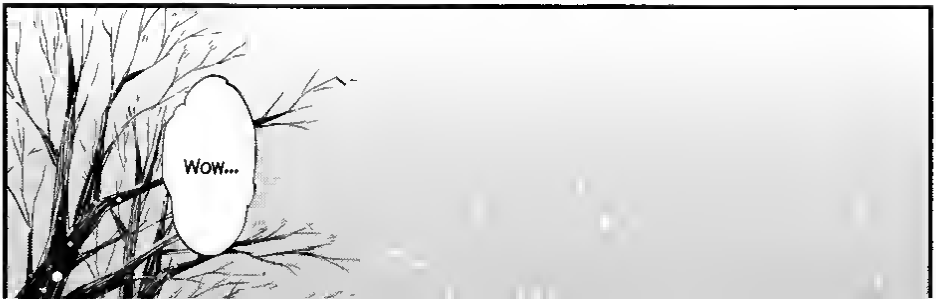
...You're like a mom, Aklo.
Ack.


...If it's okay with you, I'll cook dinner today.

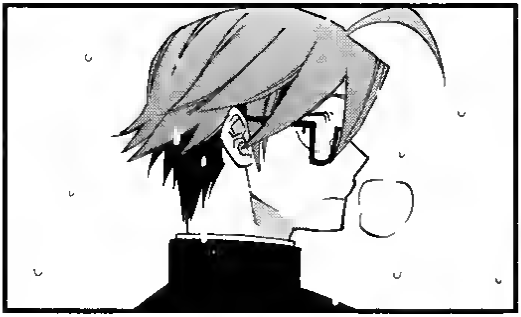
So please don't order out.

Bwah...?!
Well, if my husband insists, I guess I have no choice but to listen

Thanks for caring,
Akio.


Wow...

It really is still snowing outside.
And it'll keep coming for about a month. But it'll have to stop around when the cherry trees blossom.



I haven't been around these parts for a long time.
...Was it always so snowy around here?

Oh.

Ka-Kanako?
shff
shff

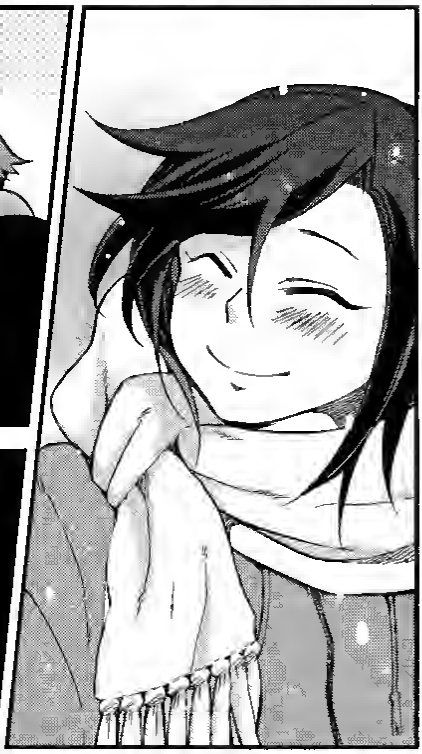
Oh...
It's cold outside, you know.
There. Now we've traded scarves.
...Thank you.

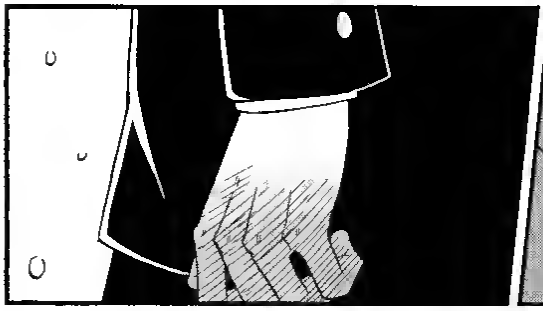
Tell me if there's anything in particular you want to eat.

I need to know what to pick up at the supermarket.

Mmm?
Oh, by the way.

Okay then, sukiyaki!
Pig!
...Pig?





...Kanako?
...Hey,
Akio.
You said you were always alone at home, right?
Mhmm.
?

So, umm, I was thinking...
...How about you just move in with me?
...What?

So, umm, I was thinking...
...How about you just move in with me?
RRRR
Hello, who is-
RRRR
RRRR...
RRRR
Hello?
Kanako?

★★★★ FOR ALL BOOK LOVERS ★★★★

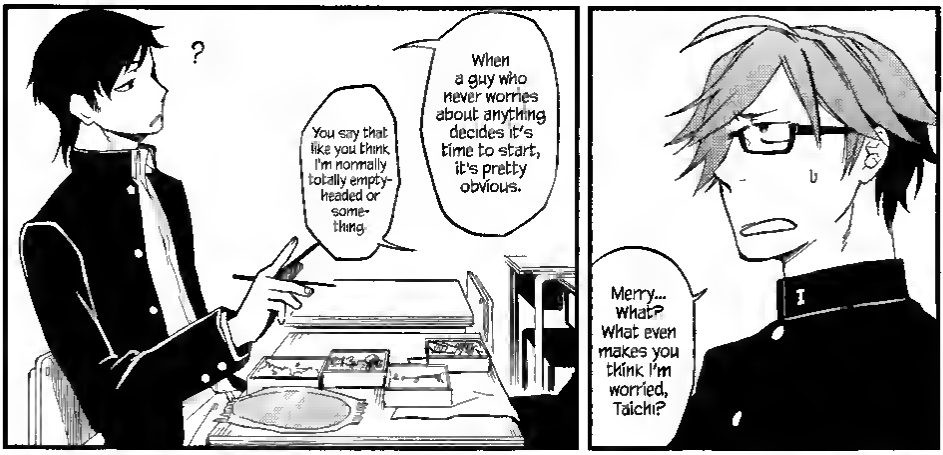
ふたりの恋愛書架

FUTARI NO RENAI SHOKA
PRESENTED BY YAMAZAKI KORE
FOURTH EPISODE

To Those Who Live in Fear, I Offer You My Hand

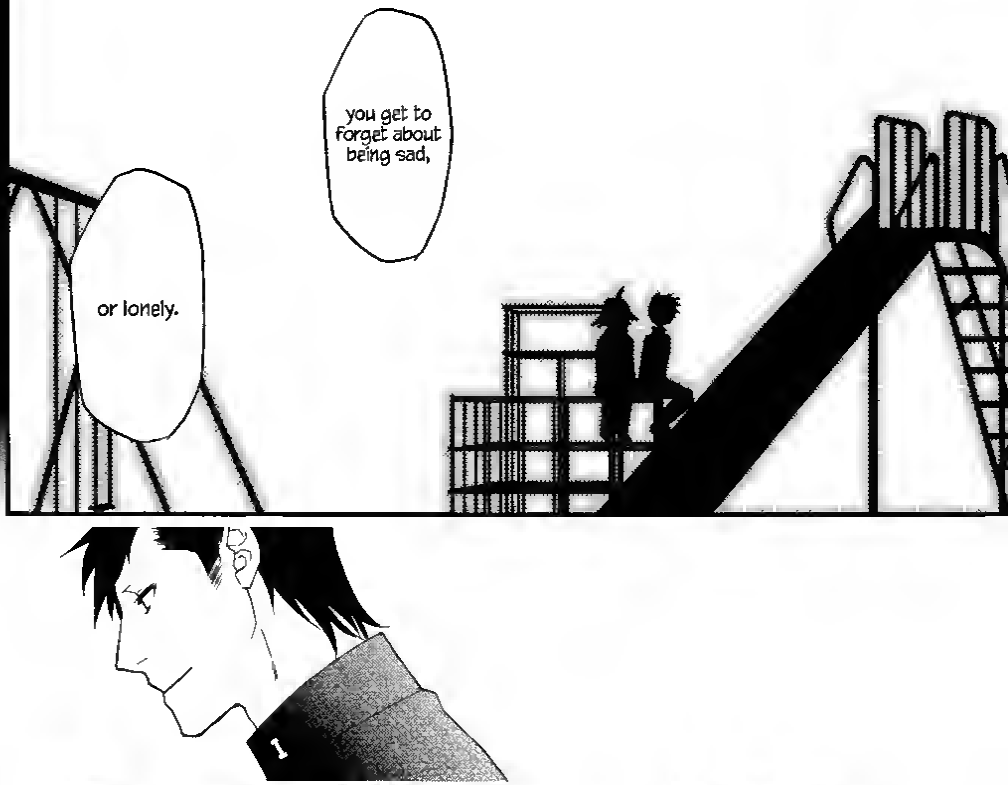
So?

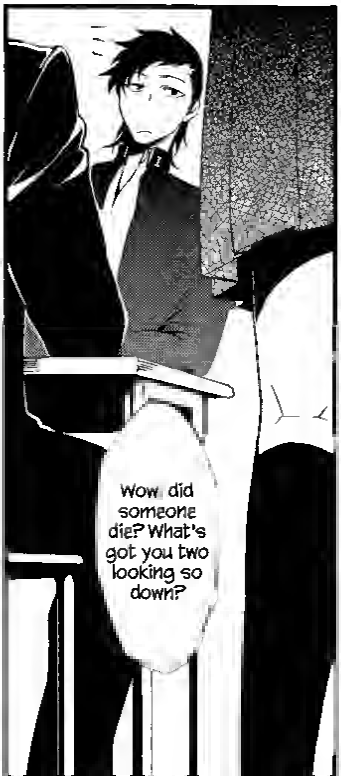
Oh Akio the Merry Redhead,
what ill omen plagues your thoughts?
AMPK


?
You say that like you think I'm normally totally empty-headed or something.
When a guy who never worries about anything decides it's time to start, it's pretty obvious.
Merry... What? What even makes you think I'm worried, Taichi?

Well, yeah. How'm I supposed to know that you're thinking when you never say anything? You've always got your nose buried in some book.
what
The whole reason I depend on books is because I'm no good at that sort of thing...
We should try this "communication" thing more often, see how it works
GAH
Way too much for you is way too little for anyone else.
You're asking for way too much!
You depend on em,
eh?

Hey, Akio...
?
What?
Hmmm.
That's disgusting
Why do you read books all the time?
Is school no fun for you?
...When you're reading a book,


you get to forget about being sad,
or lonely.


Wow, did someone die? What's got you two looking so down?

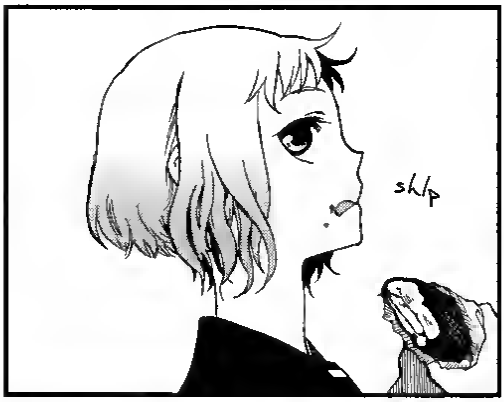
I was just thinking, you've grown enough to be able to say that, huh.
Your big brother is very proud of you

What?
I'm not your brother

Loving friends need to be paid now?
I'll give you a discount, even.
Oh, Sakamoto.
C'mon, let your loving friend help you out in your time of need.
Doesn't take much to move the world, I guess.
Seriously?
These days, money is nothing but a bit of ink printed onto paper.
They say money makes the world go round.
So what you're saying is...

There's nothing nasty about sex, it's a natural part of life.
Wow, that's nasty...
huff

From the sound of it, you didn't get anything.
Some woman wants you to move in with her, and she wants your V card as payment.
Did I get everything?
nuf
groan
drink

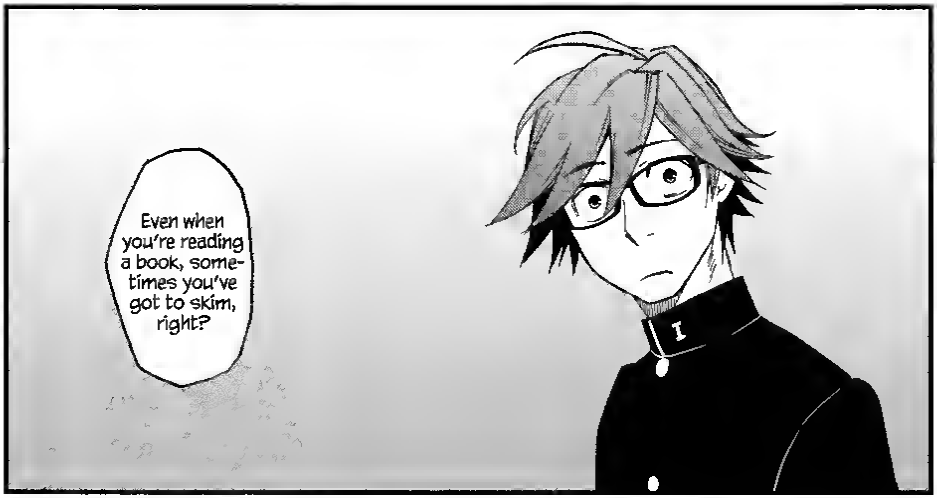

slip

I don't really get what you're so worried about.

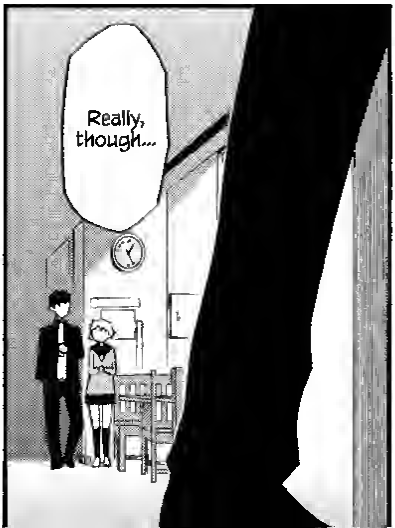
Um, more or...
Well, I don't really see a problem here.
Right now you're still living alone, aren't you? Doesn't seem like a bad deal to me
Listen to what I'm saying, dammit.

Like, are you trying to say...
...you can't trust what the person you love is telling you?
...It's not that simple.
What?!
Don't just it!
Oh yeah
Better make up your mind before she dumps you and someone else snatches her away.
She's an adult, you know.
Just do what you think is right, man.

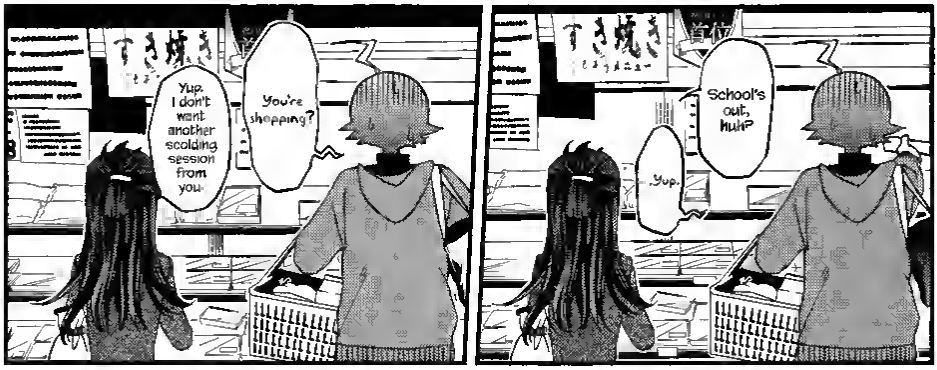
Just don't overthink it.
You'll paralyze yourself too much to move forward.


Even when you're reading a book, sometimes you've got to skim, right?

Hmm?
Well, I know he's in love and all,
but this Kanako person really sounds like she's... helpless? A hassle?


Really, though...

Most guys are pains to manage, you know
What, you thinking of snatching him away from her?
Something tells me you won't have much luck there.
Ugh, no way! Can you imagine what a pain he'd be to manage?
...Yeah, but not all of them are annoying in the same way!
Hmm?
Anyway, from the sound of it he'll be all right,
but who knows how things'll shake out in the end?
カスミマート


You're shopping?
Yup. I don't want another scolding session from you.
School's out, huh?
Yup.

.....
...It feels like it's been so long since I've seen you outside the store.

.. Guess I was wrong.
You say that like you expect me to stay in there all the time.
Oh, and about what I said back then.
ssh
ssh
It just sort of popped out. I wasn't thinking.
Hmm?
Just forget about it, okay?

But if that's what's been bothering you, then...
Of course I wouldn't mind at all if you did, but!
I mean!
Umm!
...It's not that I don't want to.
It's just...
I'm scared.

Scared?

My parents never had time for me, so my grandfather always looked after me instead.
...But then he passed away, and I've been alone ever since.

So when I looked at other families, with people bustling around the house,
I was always so jealous of them.

It's okay, Akio.
O-Oh! I'm sorry!
That didn't make any sense, did it? Let me try and organize it a litt—
It's all right.
I understand.

I know what it is you're saying.
...I was terrified.
How could I be so lucky?
How could so many things I'd always wanted fall into my lap all at once?
I kept expecting to wake up, to find out it was all a dream.
I was so, so scared.
You know, Akio.

I'm always the one saying what I want to say, making demands of you and all.

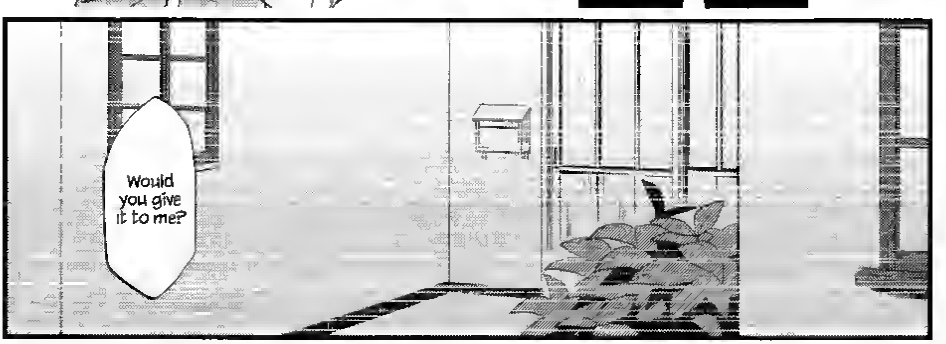
You could stand to be a little more spoiled.

Spoiled?
Well I mean, it's not very fair, is it?

...Well actually, I can demand things, too.

...Okay.
Okay then, let's hear it. I bet you it won't even be that big a deal compared to what I always ask for.

The key.
To this house.


Would you give it to me?

So that I can cook meals for you, and wake you when you're dozing.
squeeze
...You're hopeless, Akio.

I think we'll both need to study up on how to make demands.
Oh, by the way
I don't know whether it'll be today or tomorrow or whenever,
But if we get a guest, you don't need to worry about it, okay?
Tomo nrow?
I'm already getting the chills just thinking about it
A guest? You mean a friend?
...o-mgawd...
Hey, there.
I went to all that trouble giving you a call, telling you when I'd be here, and you still stood me up?
I thought I'd freeze to death waiting outside.
Well... I guess you could say that...

A phone call doesn't mean much when you don't give me any time to prepare,
Izumi!
Now there's a cold shoulder.
I see how it is. Our first reunion since graduating university, and this is how you greet me,
Kanako.

Kanako.
I see how it is. Our first reunion since graduating university, and this is how you greet me,
Now there's a cold shoul-der.
You're always just dropping in on me out of nowhere, Izumi.
Okay, I guess you have a point there.
...Who?
I

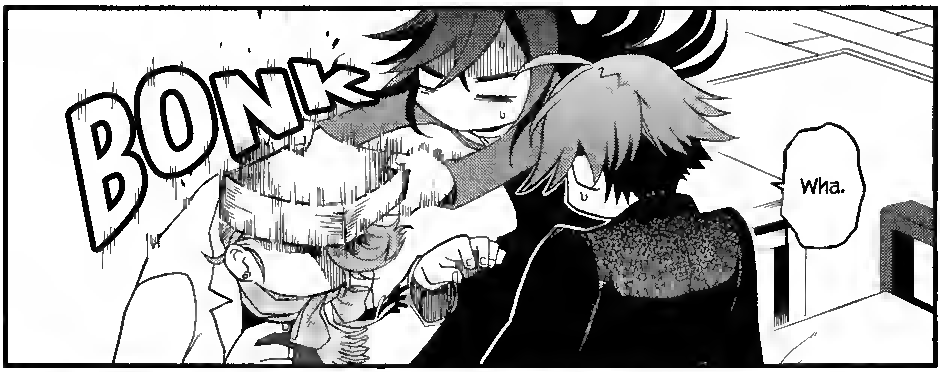
ふたりの恋愛書架

五冊目

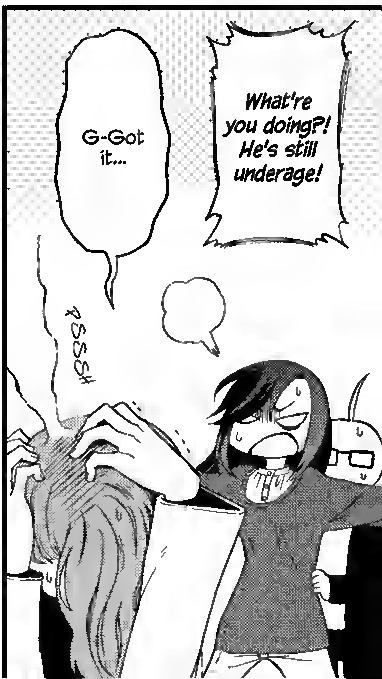
The Visitor

So how long are you going to be staying in Japan this time?
Hmm, hard to say. I've had my fill of French wine, and now I've got a hankering for loaches, so I think I might be staying a while.
...What is your job, anyway?
Starts with a seek, ends with a ret!
Erm...
O-Oh! Sorry, Akio!
Izumi was in the year above me at university.
Nanao Izumi, pleased to make your acquaintance!

So umm, Na-
You can just call me Izumi, boy.


BONK
Wha.

You're so bold now.
You didn't use to care so much about other people-


G-Got it...
What're you doing?! He's still underage!
PSSSH

tukk
HOKKAID
You've really changed,
haven't you?
.....
She didn't use to hit so hard
Attended university with Kanako, huh...
Oooo ooh...
I'll get some snacks ready. Don't make a scene.

Kanako seems less than overjoyed about the visit.
Still, this Nanao person seems to know her really well.
...But more importantly...
He (?) talks like a man, but he's so beautiful... Is he actually even Japanese?
He or she?!
I can't tell!
Umm
Mmm?
What is it, boy?
My personal space!!

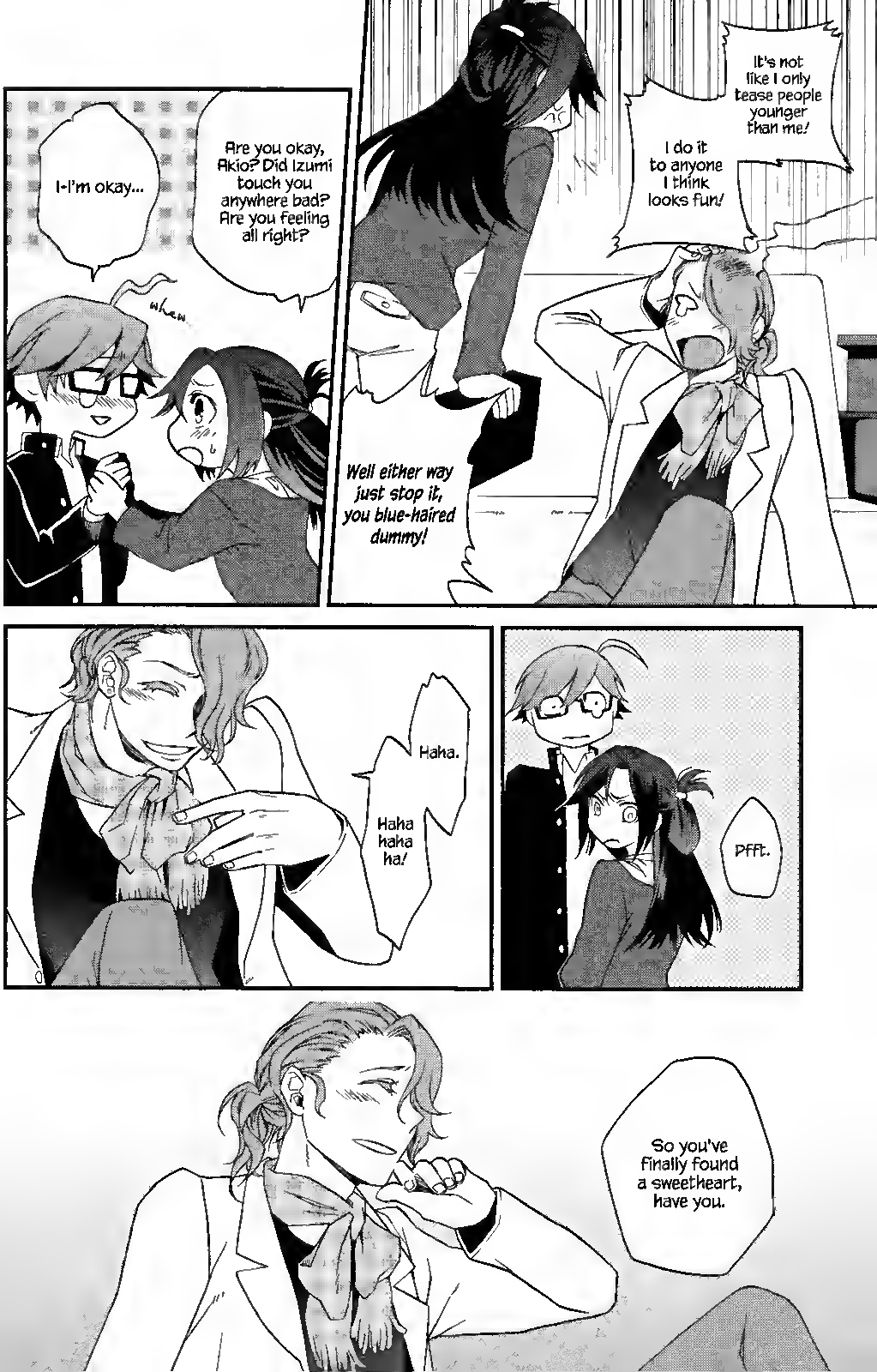
You're curious about what's going on between Kanako and I, aren't you?
...Hah.
Wha...
Good, good! Pure youngsters like you are so cute!
Kanako lost that somewhere along the way. I think I teased her too much.
You don't have to worry, boy. The relationship between us isn't what you think it is.

I suppose if you had to define it...
It's as Kanako said, nothing more and nothing less. We went to university together, and now we're just two people working in the same field.
You could say we're both hapless victims, held in thrall by books.
Victims...?

We turn to books to find ways of expressing and accepting the hopes and dreams we can't show to the outside world.
You have the same scent about you, boy.
There's no way Kanako would have gotten close to you otherwise.
Sound familiar?
...Na...

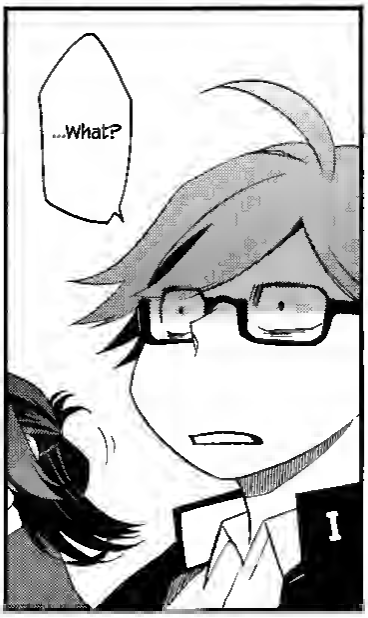
aaaaaah
Umm!
I-I...!
I don't know what's going on but I'm getting a really bad feeling about it!
Oh man...
Nana-
I'M SORRY BUT I DON'T SWING THAT WAY!
fwip
First time for everything, right?

Ka-
Ka-
KANAKO-
FWOPP
SWIP
What do you think you're...
When will you learn to stop picking on people younger than you?!
doing?! You're such an idiot! Will you ever grow up?!
You didn't have to pull out the dictionary!
And don't talk about me like I'm the same as you!

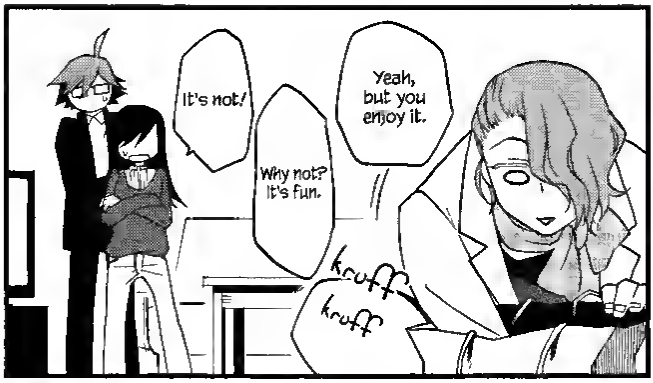

It's not like I only tease people younger than me!
I do it to anyone I think looks fun!
Well either way just stop it, you blue-haired dummy!
Are you okay, Akio? Did Izumi touch you anywhere bad? Are you feeling all right?
I-I'm okay...
whew
Haha.
Haha haha ha!
Pfft.
So you've finally found a sweetheart, have you.

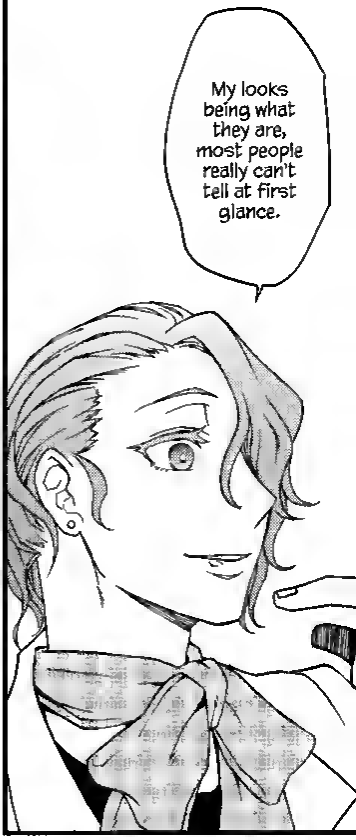
That's good.
Ms. Nakao's very happy for you.

WHAT?!
I really had you going, didn't I?
Yes, kiddo, I'm a girl.

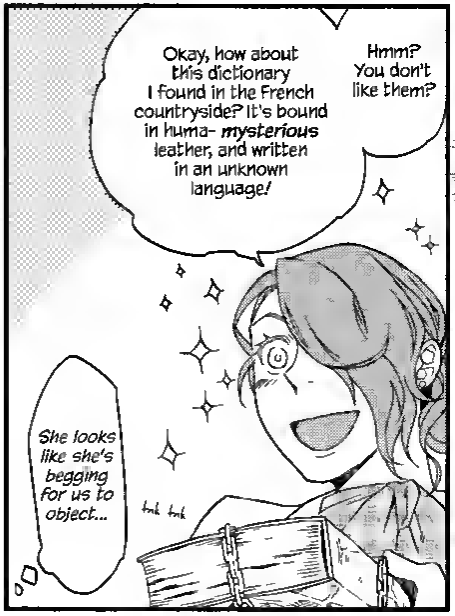

...What?

Hahaha haha.
I-I'm so sorry about this but I really couldn't tell either way...
You didn't notice?


It's not!
Yeah, but you enjoy it.
Why not? It's fun.
kruff kruff


My looks being what they are, most people really can't tell at first glance.

Oh come on, I'm sorry, okay? Here, I'll let you borrow these.
They cost me an arm and a leg so I can't let you have them, but still.
...What are they?
Pak

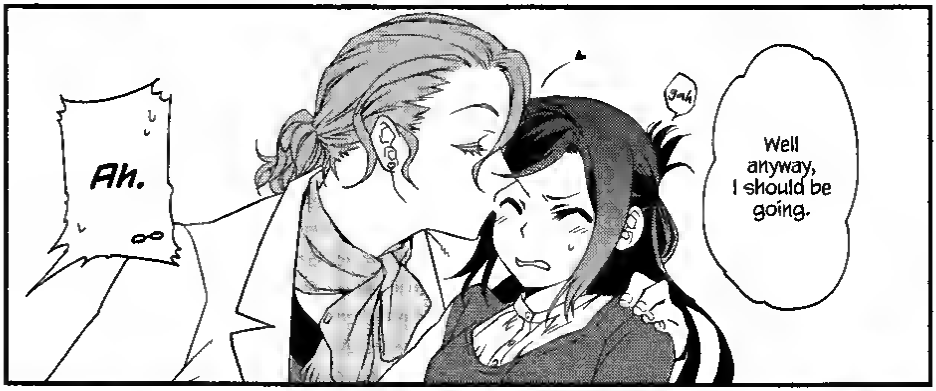

Okay, how about this dictionary I found in the French countryside? It's bound in huma- mysterious leather, and written in an unknown language!
Hmm? You don't like them?
She looks like she's begging for us to object...
hnk hnk

She's a Lovecraft fan?!
Italian copies of The King in Yellow and the Necronomicon.
Super rare!

Send an ambulance!
One time she even brought over this book called *Faerie Elixir for Dummies* and actually made the stuff inside, and she had to go to the hospital...
That was when I learned there really is a light at the other end!
Izumi goes crazy over things that're bizarre, or have a history to them.
Oh...
Well, anyway.
I suppose if Kanako cares that much about you, then I can trust her to you.
I'll be expecting good things from you,
Akio.

Mwah
Huh.
...Oh.
Wait, don't tell me you two haven't even kissed yet.
It was just a show of friendship.
Haven't you read Grillparzer's poem?
...Whaaaaaaaaaat?!

It hurts to have something that belongs to you taken away, does it?
Maybe you should think about growing up a little.
What?


Well anyway, I should be going.
Ah.

Far be it from me to get in between you lovebirds.
And I need to keep searching for some more books I want!
?...

Phew!
She came and went like a hurricane.
Yeah...
What're we gonna do with this book?
Hmm?
...Here, Akio.
I
...Oh!
The key.
To this house.
There.
It's yours now.

Thank you.
This is the spare key to my place.
If I didn't give it to you now, I get the feeling Izumi's weirdness would make me forget.
weirdness...
Achoo!
...Akio?
stoop over a little?
Hmm?

When Izumi did that to you.
It made me so angry...
Buh...
Wha?!
BWAH
You can't let down your guard like that.
...You're my husband, Akio

...Well,
that goes for you too, okay?
crrrk
Oh.
ka-chak

Akio!
Welcome back!
kapp
I'm home,
Kanako.

What do I do, it's actually kinda friendly
Umm, hi
Greetings

Her first kotatsu.
Look, I'm a kotatsu turtle
fwoop

Break-fast!
Hup!
fwup
Over-sleeping again?
Kanako?

SPECIAL

特別編
1冊目

I Am a Husband

FUTARI NO RENAI SHOKA

ふたりの恋愛書架

She's really not a morning person...
crk crk
Kanako, time to wake up!
Mmh...
Akio...?
Swoosh
Kana-ko?

...Asleep in your underwear again!
Wake up already!
ah
Yes, yes. Well done
...I can smell miso...
tup

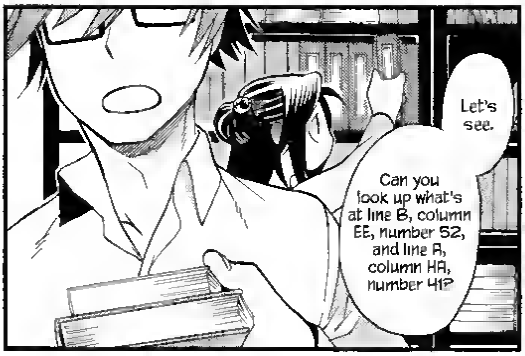
I made miso soup with daikon and abura-age. You should hurry up before it gets col-
Good morning,
dear!

...Kanako,
I keep telling you, please stop calling me that!!
Another day at Pirka Used Books,
another scream from me.
Oh?
There.
On Sale
ka-tak

Recipes of the Northern Peoples?
From the cover it's from the second print run, back on September 12th of 1972 wait, no, from the feel of the paper it's from the very first run, printed on April 10th of 1961
The 1961 edition's out of print now so it should fetch a premium. What's it doing here on the bargain shelf?

Oh wow, there's even a 1923 edition Aina Shingoushuu in here
Maybe Kanako got it confused with the 1972 edition?

What?
I put the wrong book up for sale?


Let's see.
Can you look up what's at line B, column EE, number 52, and line A, column HA, number 41?

Line B, column EE, number 52, and line A, column HA, number 41
Yup, that's them

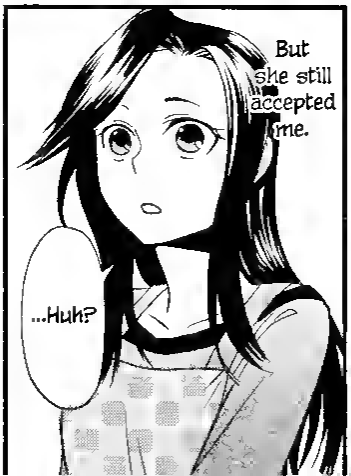
We found it before someone bought it, so no harm done.
I must've put it there yesterday while I was almost dozing off... sorry.

I just wish I had talents besides this...
Umm, hey, cheer up!
Everyone has things they're not good at, it's fine!
If only it worked for math and science...

What it looks like organizing books
Yeah, but this is the only thing I'm good at at all...
...You really do remember everything, don't you?
I can do book names, but that's as far as it goes. Where they are and what they're about is beyond me.

I don't know how I'd manage without you now.
Thanks for being with me, Akio.

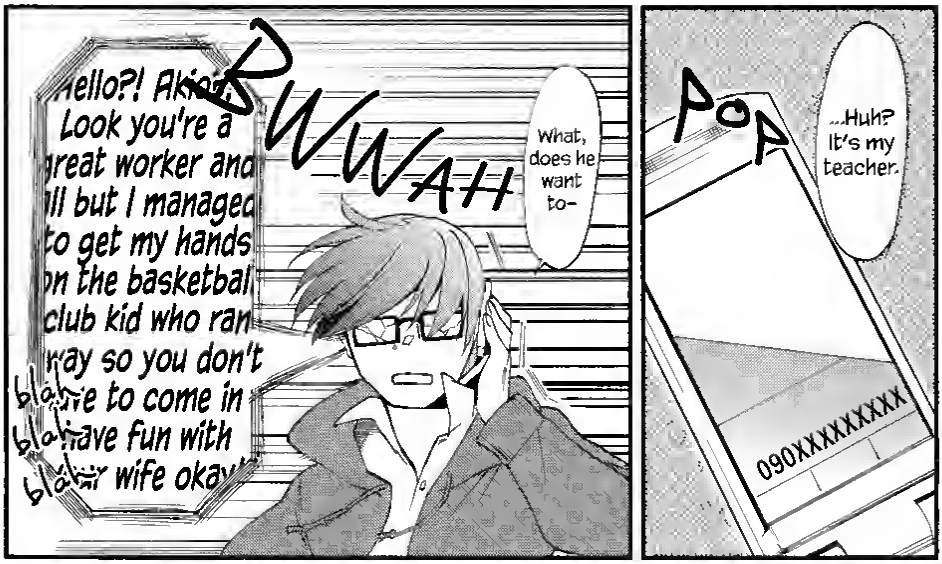
I'm only here...
...because you are, Kanako.


But she still accepted me.
...Huh?

Back then, I didn't care about anything but books...

I always end up letting her know what I'm thinking somehow...
skrch
skrch
...Okay?
?
I-I mean, just leave it all to me!
Oh! Umm! Nothing!
You don't have anything to do during the weekend, right of
urse you don't I know you have work to do at that bookstor
nd trust me I'm not forcing you to do this or anything but he
'll have you know that absence makes the heart grow fonde
and so give
some alone tim
nd come out thi
Sunday t
me of
rattle
rattle
rattle
Oh, Him... I think I've seen Him drop by a few times!
The teacher who heads the Library Committee at school kind of insisted...
W-Well umm, I should get going now.
School? Isn't today a Sunday?
!!
...Okay, then...

..Okay
Promise.
You will? Really?
Um, look.
I'll be back by lunchtime, okay?
Really!
Promise?
Heheh.

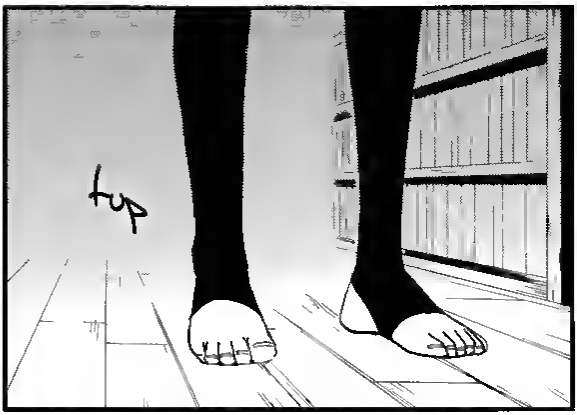

RWWAH
Hello?! Akio!
Look you're a
great worker and
all but I managed
to get my hands
on the basketball
club kid who ran
away so you don't
blame to come in
blahave fun with
blahir wife okay!
What, does he want to-
POP
...Huh? It's my teacher.
090XXXXXXXX

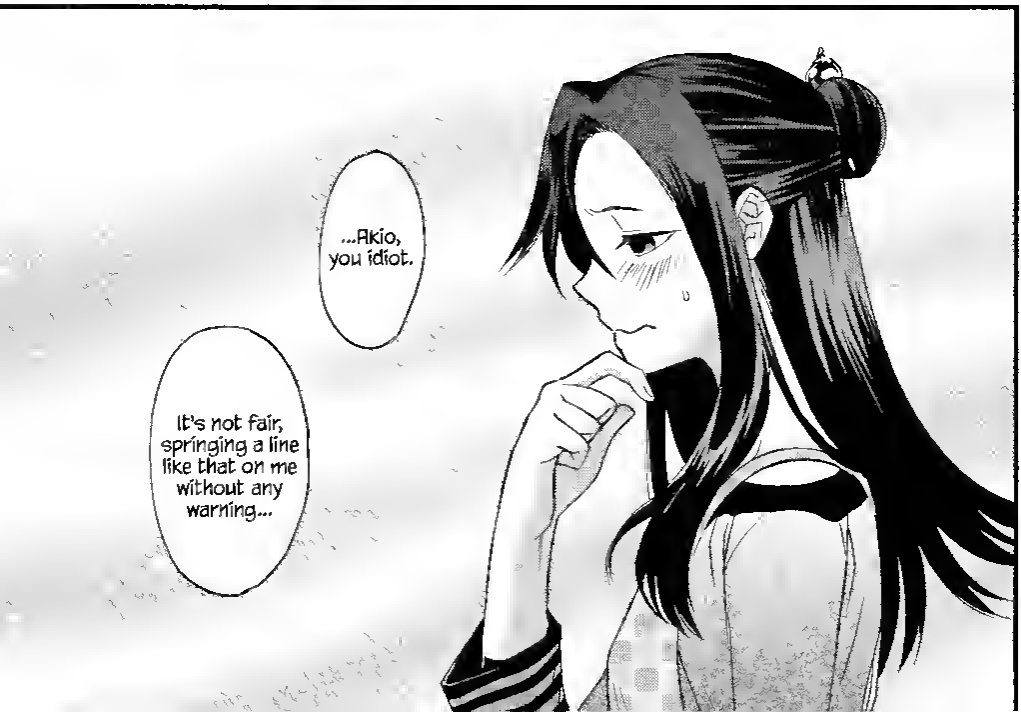
O-Okay..
...He just called and said I didn't need to come in! I can stay here!
You should cherish this free time with your woman oh but make sure to use protection okay oh know here let me recommend you me good cond-
BEEP

Oh.
Akio?
Kinda makes me feel silly after doing a pinky promise and all..
I guess you'll be able to help me out all day, then.
Uh huh

You know,
you should really be more careful about saying things like that to a woman.
"I'm only here because you are, Kanako."
Oh.
Right...

Kup kup kup...
I'd like to take another look at the storeroom in the back today. Hang on, I'll make some tea before we start.
Okay.
...Ugh...
fwip
Agh
I'm such an idiot...


tup


...Akio, you idiot.
It's not fair, springing a line like that on me without any warning...

ding
ding
I'll get it.
Hello, who is–
Sup?
"Oh it's you" is kinda cold considering I brought lunch over. You could've been starving and then where would you have been without me?
Oh, it's you, Sakamoto.

Huh?
...That's it?
What's with the uniform?
I do delivery part-time for Taichi's family's restaurant
Only the close places, but still
Huh.
?
You're still just you, Sakamoto.
Where's the "You look cute, Sakamoto," or the "It looks good on you, Sakamoto"?!
It's nothing for you to worry about.
Ugh, will you ever stop being such a huge dork? Kanako's gonna leave you if you keep that up.

Uh huh.
Oh, really now? Well fine, whatever, you big dummy!
See you at school!

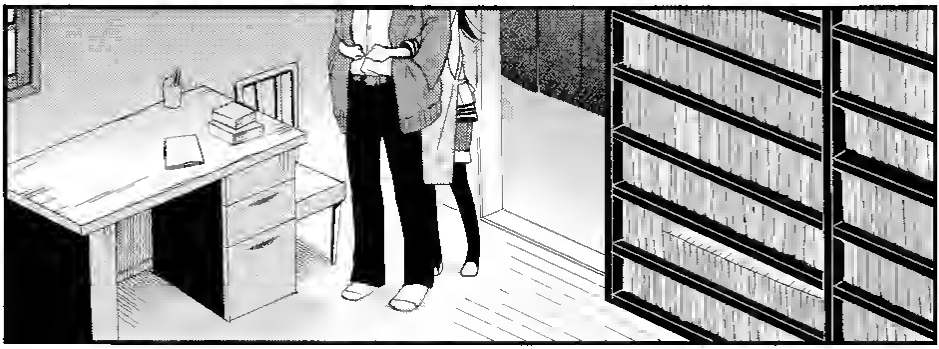
What was that all about?

...Classmate?
Mhmm.

ACK
Kanako?

Her name's Sakamoto.
Hmm.
...She's pretty cute, isn't she.
Huh? I guess she is, yes.
...But...
To me, you're still the cutest, Kanako.

...Thanks,
Akio.
...Don't mention it.

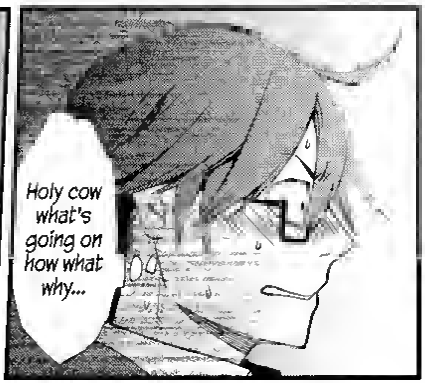


How about a little break?

The sun's setting.
Mhmm. But it's summer now, so the days will be getting longer.
Sounds good. It's already dinnertime, isn't it?
So, I've got a book here that's just right for a summer's sunset.
That's Naked Grace's *Beside the Pond!*
I always wanted to read it... Is it really okay for me to read it first?
Oh?

Buh?
Whoever said you'd be reading it alone?

How did things even get this way...


Holy cow what's going on how what why...

I really like how your chest's so broad. It's just so solid and stable, you know?

Aaah...
Am I turning the pages too fast?
N-N-N-No it's just fine!
Please don't look this way I'm so embarrassed I'm gonna die!!
She's not teasing me about it, though.
We live together, and give lip service to all that nonsense about being married,
but really, I'm more like her little brother, aren't I?

Maybe I'm only worrying about this because I'm a kid.
Sitting like this with you reminds me of being with my father.
Huh?
It makes me feel so safe.

.. A-Actually, for me..
Sitting like this with you is making me, umm... agitated.
Gulp
Papp
Steps?! What kind of steps?!
Whoops! Sorry about that.
Tell you what, once we have the marriage certificate and it's official, we'll take steps to get you used to being so close to me.
Kanako?

Mmm...
...But for now,
this'll have to do, okay?

That just makes me more hot and bothered...
Well tough! Deal with it!
Another day at Pirka Used Books.
The two of us are managing just fine.

To Akio
I'll be out all day
buying books. You don't
have to cook for m
Okay.
Kanako?
errrk
slam

SPECIAL

特別編
2冊目

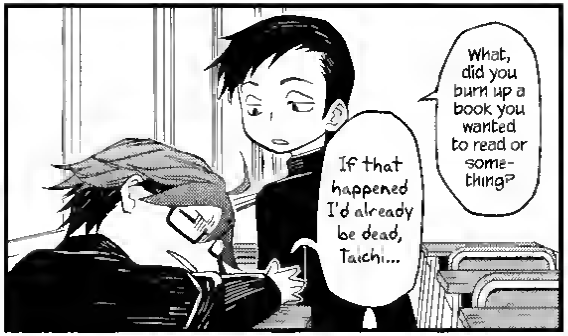
Sentimental Lovers

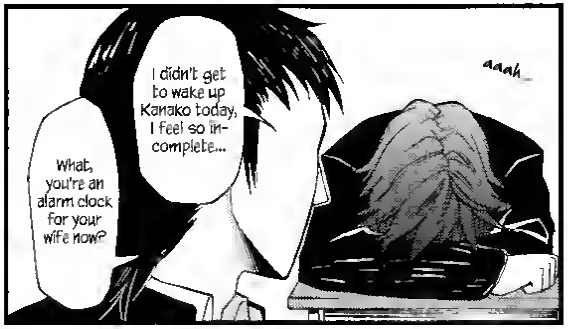
FUTARI NO RÉNAI SHOKA

ふたりの恋愛書架

What's gotten you looking so down Akio?

Finally got away from the ball and chain, huh?
What?! No!


What, did you burn up a book you wanted to read or something?
If that happened I'd already be dead, Taichi...


I didn't get to wake up Kanako today, I feel so incomplete...
What, you're an alarm clock for your wife now?
aaah

She said she wanted to get out early to buy some more books. Said she was going to a used book fair that was pretty far away, and go visit some friends too.
She was already gone when I woke up, and the note she left said she'd be staying at a friend's house for the night.

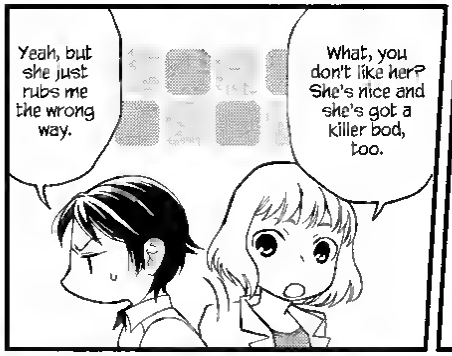
Kanako...
Are you having fun?
Why're you such an ass-hole
What a pain
...Oh!
That one, please!

The one on the right... Oh, and that one, and this one, and the one in that line there!
Thank you!
Alright miss, hold up just a sec!
Let's see one, two, three...
That'll be 2150 yen
Don't you have anything better to do than come to these run down old book fairs every time, Ms. Seta? You're still so young
Of course not! I love books!

I hope this is enough to shore up the more expensive book section back home.
I've still got some purchases to make, so this'll have to do.
Hope Akio likes them.
Urggh...

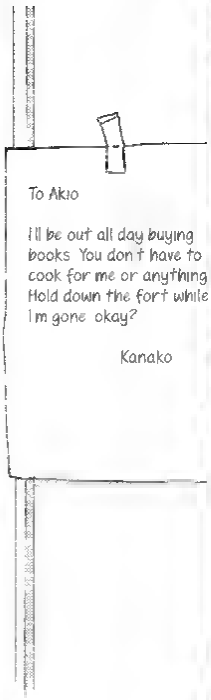
Wanna drop by the arcade, then? I hear they've got some really good stuff in the claw machine lately!
.. So you don't have anything to do after school, right?
Mmmmgh... The store's closed today so yeah, nothing... absolutely nothing...
You're too good, it'd be no contest.
Why?!
No.
We could have a contest to see who gets the most stuff-
Would it kill you to at least humor me...
Kiku-chi!
Huh?

Guh.


Yeah, but she just rubs me the wrong way.
What, you don't like her? She's nice and she's got a killer bod, too.

Math teacher wants to see you. You know, Inada?

But even if I did,
Kanako wouldn't be there.
Crrrk

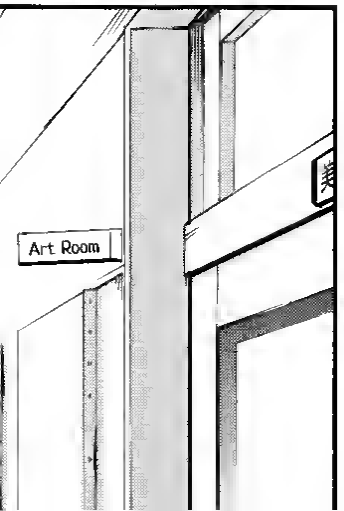

To Akio
I'll be out all day buying books. You don't have to cook for me or anything. Hold down the fort while I'm gone, okay?
Kanako

Ugh, I hate this!
...Guess I'll go home?

Huh?
Grab him.
Okay, Yusuga.

KUPP
Wha?

Whaaa?


Art Room

You don't have anything to do, right? Then come on, let's go.
Wha... wait! Wait wait wait! Let's go?! Let's go where?!
Sakamoto, stop it! Let go of me!

SSSK
So I said, why not come to the art room and work with me instead of just grinding ink by yourself?
I'm always the only one here, anyway.
I'm the only member of the calligraphy club who actually practices. It's hard to concentrate when nobody's here.
Okay.
What're we doing in the art room? Why're you practicing calligraphy?
Yusugi practically lives down here after school, so it feels homey.
Huh.
...So, hey.
If you're bored, why don't you try making something, or drawing something?

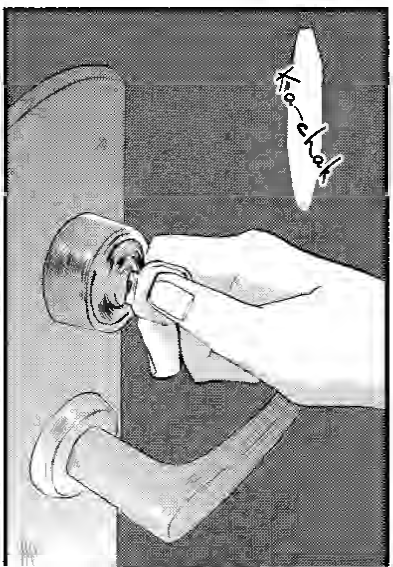
Wait, isn't this art club property?
Is it okay for me to use it?
If you hunker down and concentrate your mind won't wander to whatever's bothering you.
Besides, tools are meant to be used. They don't get better if you lock 'em away somewhere and admire them
Yeah, don't sweat it! If it wasn't okay it wouldn't be sitting out there
It's the same for books, right? They're better off being read than being perfect but unread on some bookshelf somewhere.
. That makes sense

What should I do?
This isn't really my field. I've never tried drawing before.
I mean, that sounds good, but...
She looks like Kanako does,
when she's reading a book.

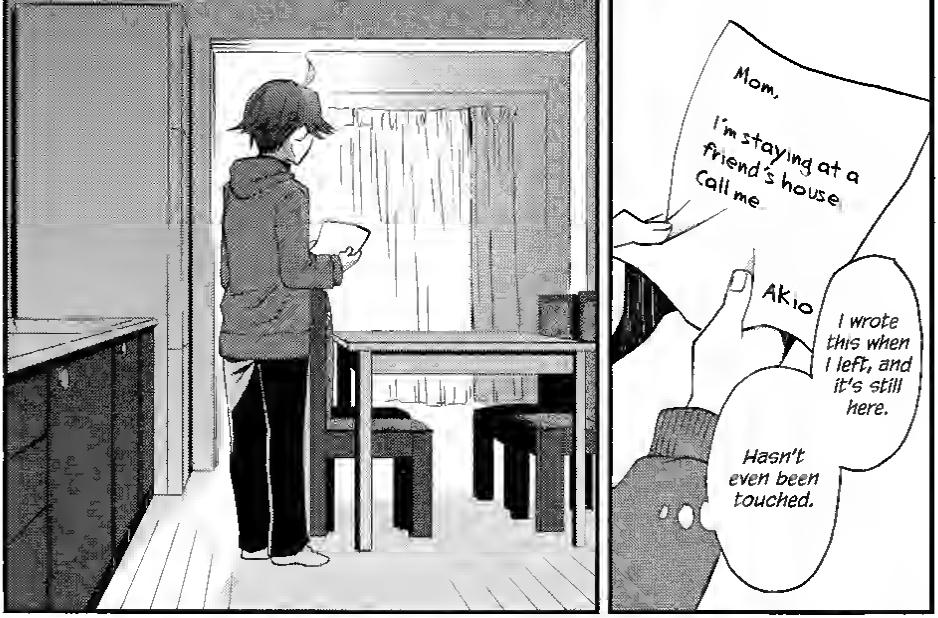
Do you have some wood I could use?
Hmm, do we?
About the size of the palm of your hand
Hey, Sakamoto.
bafunk
This do?
konk
Made up your mind on what you're making?
Yeah, this is great.
Thanks, Sakamoto

Yeah.

I'm...
Home.
crrrrrk

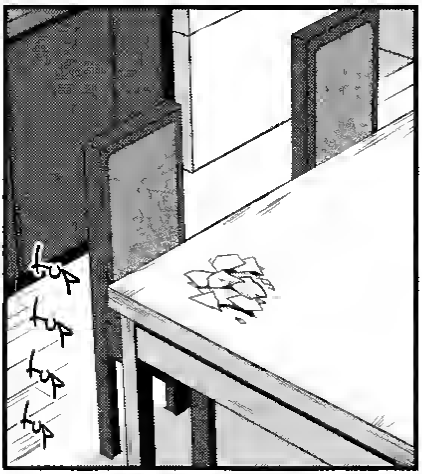

ka-chak

hwoooo
This was just a waste of time.
At least drop by home every so often, yeah? They might be worried about you.
I'd kind of hoped that Mom...
Or maybe Dad would've come back, but no dice.
Like people who won't even give me a call would be worried about me.


Mom,
I'm staying at a friend's house. Call me.
Akio
I wrote this when I left, and it's still here.
Hasn't even been touched.

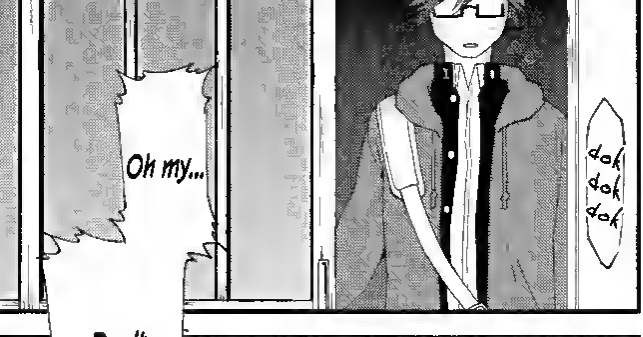
...I guess...
Nobody's coming home here.

bam

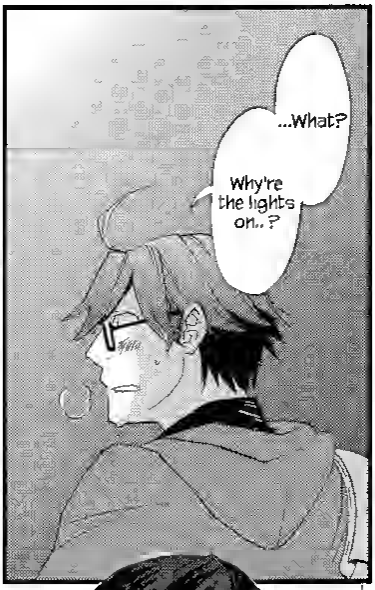

tap
tap
tap
tap

Who needs a house nobody's ever coming home to?
It's better to be somewhere where I'm waiting for someone to come back, even if she's not there right now.
Haa
A place that's old, but warm, and welcoming.

A place that has her scent.
...Gah!
Haa...


Oh my...
dok dok dok

Don't come in any further Akio!!
Wha
Bwuh


...What?
Why're the lights on..?

I-I thought you said you weren't coming home today...
She's okay with showing panties but not a bath towel?

Well,
yes, that was the plan, but...

Ka-Kanako?!
What're you doing coming home so late?
Whuh... Why...

But it felt like you were waiting for me.
It hadn't even been a full day since I'd seen you, but suddenly I really missed you. So—
And when I thought of you sitting alone at home, just waiting...

I missed you, too.
I'M NOT WEARING ANYTHING UNDER THIS YOU KNOW
WHAT'RE YOU DOING, AKIO?!
AAAAA AAAAAA AAAAAH AKIO?!

Still, how'd you make it back so fast? You said you were going to take a whole day
Anything's possible when you hit a hundred miles per hour on the freeway

※Don't do this at home

I made these to kill time after school today.
Sparkle
Umm I wanted you to have one of these, if you like.
I dropped them earlier but here
Oh, that's right.

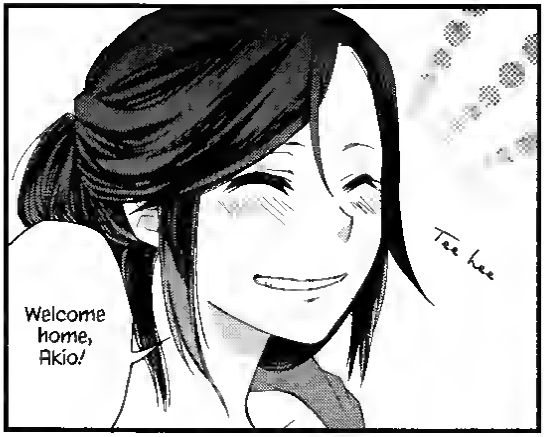
...Thanks...
How could I not love something you made for me, Akio?

Yup, a matching set.
I-I made one for myself too. S-So it's sort of like a matching set.

It?
Oh!
That's right, you forgot to say it!

...Oh...

When you come home,
what are you supposed to say?


Welcome home, Akio!
Tee hee

I'm...
I'm home.
I guess

Huh?
Kanako!
Oh.
...Erm.
I
skkf

...Welcome home.

Thank you, Akio!

But they're full of warmth, all the same.

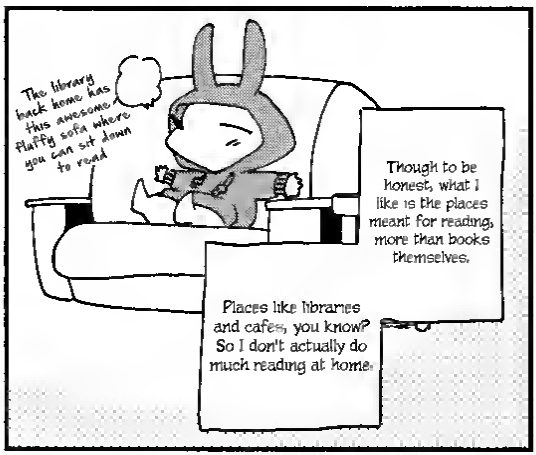
Afterword

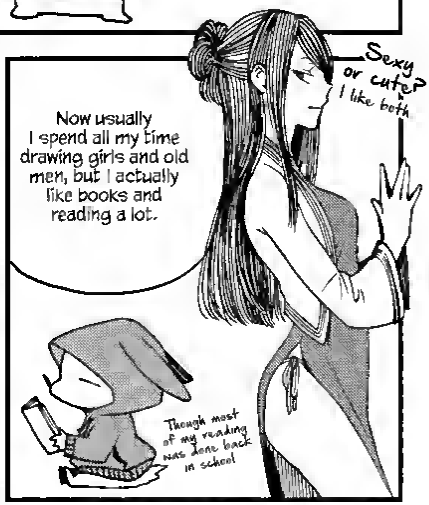
I need something sweet...

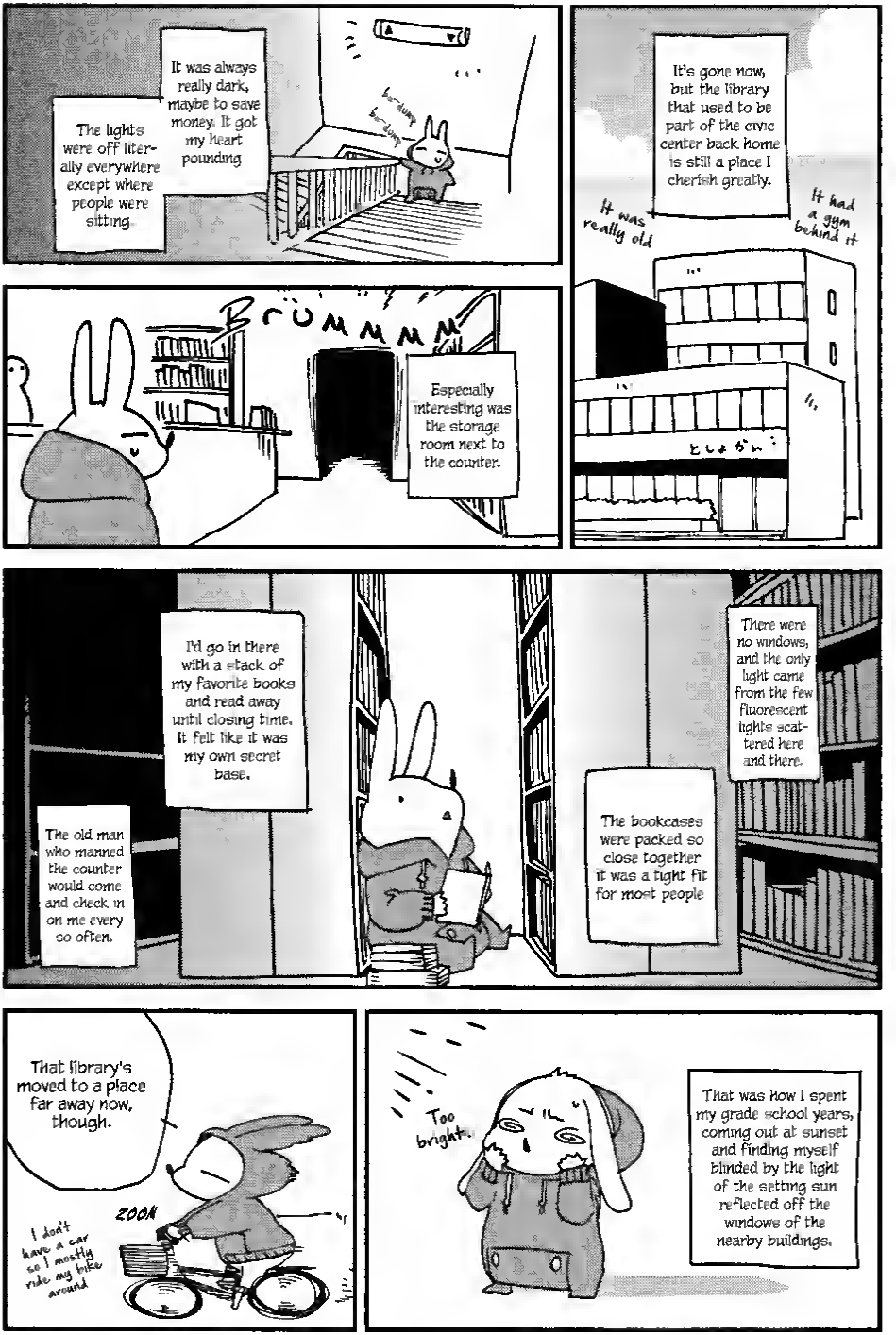
We'd like to hire you
Whaaa?!
What's this, spam mail?
I only had a notebook at the time
When I think how it's already been a year and a half since my previous editor took me under his wing, I don't quite know what to feel.

I personally feel like I'm teetering on the brink of utter failure so often I wonder if I'll ever make it I'm so thankful to my editors Mr K and Mr. M for staying with me.

Hello, I'm Yamazaki Kore.
Thank you so much for buying the first volume of Futari no Ren'ai Shoka!
bow
I'm a rabbit because my friends say I act like one


The library back home has this awesome fluffy sofa where you can sit down to read
Though to be honest, what I like is the places meant for reading, more than books themselves.
Places like libraries and cafes, you know? So I don't actually do much reading at home.


Sexy or cute?
I like both
Now usually I spend all my time drawing girls and old men, but I actually like books and reading a lot.
Though most of my reading was done back in school


The lights were off literally everywhere except where people were sitting.
It was always really dark, maybe to save money. It got my heart pounding
It's gone now, but the library that used to be part of the civic center back home is still a place I cherish greatly.
It was really old
It had a gym behind it
BRUMMM
Especially interesting was the storage room next to the counter.
I'd go in there with a stack of my favorite books and read away until closing time. It felt like it was my own secret base.
There were no windows, and the only light came from the few fluorescent lights scattered here and there.
The bookcases were packed so close together it was a tight fit for most people
The old man who manned the counter would come and check in on me every so often.
That library's moved to a place far away now, though.
I don't have a car so I mostly ride my bike around
ZOOM
Too bright.
That was how I spent my grade school years, coming out at sunset and finding myself blinded by the light of the setting sun reflected off the windows of the nearby buildings.

I keep telling myself I should read more books, since I'm drawing a manga about a used book store, but whenever I try I always end up falling asleep...
Zzz
I've become nocturnal lately
I had actually planned for these two to be in a bit more fantasy-ish world at first
By the way, most of the books in Kanako's store are from her father's collection.
The store got its start when they had so many books that they had no choice but to sell some. Basically like Akihiko's folks from Saka no Ue no Kumo.
Seems all the mountains of books started getting in the way
Back to the land where I was born and raised
Maybe you might recognize some of these places yourself
Oh, and most of the locales in the manga come from the neighborhoods at home
Wandering around with camera in hand
Ever since I started drawing manga I found myself reading less novels and more research material, but when I find the time to read novels every so often, I enjoy them just as much as I always did.
I also picked up a love for western fairy tales and fantasy. H****y P*****r is nice and all, but personally I recommend The D**mspell Trilogy and The N*schan Trilogy.
Anyway, see you next volume!
Thanks again!
Will they be able to bare their hearts to one another before things come to a head and they start fighting?
Kanako's the kind who keeps her secrets close to her chest, and Akio's quick on the uptake.
Fighting?
Fighting